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Note: 23 April 2007

The Family Composition Standard has been updated to remove ambiguity and to establish the precedence for coding 'other family' when another family already exists in the household. An 'other family' can only be formed by people who are not related to any couple family or one parent family already present in the household. For further information, see the following updated sections: **Underlying Concepts, Classification & Coding, Output, and Appendix A of Household Composition.**

The 'Glossary', and 'Definition of common concepts' have also been amended to assist users understanding of the specific meaning of terms when used in the ABS context.

ABS Family, Household and Income Unit Variables provide an accurate statistical picture of the structures of families in society, so that debates related to social policy and social support can draw on objective evidence about families, taken from a range of statistical sources. The standards aim to achieve this by providing standard definitions of concepts, methods of data collection, derivation procedures and output formats, for use in all relevant ABS and external statistical collections. The standards are underpinned by a consistently defined concept of the family.

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1. In 1993 the ABS began issuing standards on aspects of the family and the household in Australia. In 1995 many of these standards were consolidated in 'Standards for statistics on the family' (ABS Cat. no. 1286.0). As part of the ongoing cycle of reviews conducted by the ABS into all existing standards for social and labour statistics, the ABS has undertaken a review of the standards for family and household statistics resulting in a revised suite of standards.

2. The broad purpose of these standards is to provide an accurate statistical picture of the structures of families in society, so that debates related to social policy and social support can draw on objective evidence about families, taken from a range of statistical sources. The standards aim to achieve this by providing standard definitions of concepts, methods of data collection, derivation procedures and output formats, for use in all relevant ABS and external statistical collections. The standards are underpinned by a consistently defined concept of the family, which is sufficiently all embracing to inform such debate and sufficiently robust to be useful in a variety of statistical applications.

3. These applications often involve bringing to bear data from a variety of sources on an issue or problem.

4. Key issues include the diversity of families and the changing structure of households, relationship breakdown and family formation and dissolution, the value of caring in families, the value of unpaid household work, the combination of paid work and family responsibilities, the way in which men and women share family responsibilities, support from absent or extended family members, the needs of disadvantaged families, and

the importance of secure and affordable housing for families.

5. This paper explains the precise concept of the family used in the ABS as the basis for standards for statistics on the household and family, and defines the concepts which are utilised in the particular standards. It contains a brief description of the standards themselves, and explains how operational procedures and standard question modules enable the collection of data which conform to the standards. It also contains a summary of the changes made between these standards and 'Standards for statistics on the family' released in 1995, and a glossary of terms containing definitions applicable to all the standards.

6. The standards which form the basic suite of ABS variables on the family and the household are:

- Relationship in household
- Family composition
- Household composition
- Social marital status
- Registered marital status
- Income unit composition

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Relationship in household

7. The standard now recognises the two separate input classifications for this variable, which are applied depending on the collection methodology used. The standard emphasises the prime purpose of this variable as an input to family formation rather than as an output variable in its own right.

Family composition

8. The name of the variable has been changed from 'Family type' to 'Family composition'. The classification has been revised in order to reflect a more logical sequence of decision-making in family formation; however the resultant output remains fully compatible with 'Family type' and an appendix to 'Family composition' provides a full correspondence table between the two classifications.

Household composition

9. The name of the variable has been changed from 'Household type' to 'Household composition'. The structure of the 'Household composition' classification has been changed to allow integration with 'Family composition' as this better suits ABS output requirements. In particular users of data on families and households will now be able to conflate data consistently, as the presence or absence of unrelated individuals to families in a household is no longer a core criterion at the base level of the classification.

Social marital status

Registered marital status

10. These standards have undergone minor changes to clarify the application of question modules and to maintain consistency with other standards in this suite.

Income unit composition

11. This is a new standard intended for use where a statistical unit is required for analysis of the levels and distribution of income. Income units are two or more persons who pool their income and savings, or an individual with sole command over their income, consumption and savings. They are formed in similar fashion to families within households, using 'Relationship in household' data, and may be said to sit between the individual and the household, with many characteristics in common with families.

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12. The concept of the family is central to ABS Family standards. In devising its definition of the family, the ABS has recognised that notions of what constitutes a family vary considerably. Some people consider their family to be the relatives with whom they live while others extend the definition of family to include relatives who live in other dwellings. For some, the notion of family includes people who are unrelated.

13. In the statistical context, it is necessary to have a clear and comprehensive definition of a family which takes into consideration the range of analytical uses to which statistics about the family will ultimately be put, as well as the practicalities of collecting the data. Inherently this involves narrowing the definition of the family unit and restricting who is considered a family member.

14. There are two main contexts in which the term 'family' is likely to be used as a data concept. The first is in the provision of data about the extent to which people may provide support and assistance to their relatives. In this context, the definition of family needs to be restricted only by a specification of the types of relationships which apply. In the second context, which this suite of standards mainly concerns, the label 'family' is given to the key statistical unit used in the analysis of data about the characteristics and circumstances of families. For this purpose it is necessary to further constrain a family to people who live together in a single household. Without this constraint it would not be possible in any practical way to place a boundary around the statistical unit 'family'. Consequently the notion of family that the ABS refers to in most of its statistical work may in some settings be referred to by its long name 'household family', as a way of distinguishing it from extended family networks which are not bounded by a single dwelling.

15. The definition of Family appearing in the National Community Services Data Dictionary (Vers 3, AIHW, 2004) reflects the use of the term 'family' in this extended context:

- 'Two or more people related by blood, marriage (including step-relations), adoption or fostering and who may or may not live together. They may form the central core of support networks for individuals.'

16. The contextual material provided in support of this definition explains the uses of this concept in comparison with the more restricted 'household family':

- 'The 'household family' has been traditionally viewed as a building block of society and it is the predominant unit reported statistically and historically. However, the 'household family', since it is tied to the idea of co-residence, forms only a snapshot in time and refers only to related people who live in the same household at a point in time. Related persons who leave the central household (to) live in other households may still participate in the lives of other family members they do not live with in a variety of ways, including financial, material, physical, emotional, legal and spiritual. For instance, frail older people may receive help from their adult children even though they do not live in the same household.'

Data on families are essential elements for the study of the well being of family groups and in this way for the study of the well being of individuals. They are a tool for assessing the type of and level of support to which a person has access.

By defining the extended family as the central support network for (the) individual, support which would not have been defined as accessible to the individual using the 'Household family' definition becomes apparent. It is important to recognise the 'family beyond the household' when examining types and levels of support available to individuals.'

17. Often the concepts of family and household refer to the same set of people when applied to a particular dwelling. This is because the family is a subset of the household by definition and, in Australian society, a household frequently comprises a single family. The family and the household are however two distinct concepts, and do not comprise identical populations. Persons who live alone, live in group households, or share a household with a family to which they are unrelated are according to the ABS' statistical definitions members of households, but not members of families. Furthermore, a household may be comprised of two (or more) families.

18. The ABS defines **household** as:

- 'One or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, usually resident in the same private dwelling'.

19. This definition is similar to the System of National Accounts (SNA) definition which is:

- 'A small group of persons who share the same living accommodation, who pool some, or all, of their income and wealth and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food.'

20. The ABS definition varies from that of the SNA only in specifically allowing lone person households, and in removing any reference to collective consumption.

21. For statistical purposes **family** is defined as:

- 'Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.'

22. Although the majority of households in Australia are one family households, as the basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other relationship some households will contain more than one family. This definition of family has therefore been written to encompass households which contain more than one family. For a full discussion of the way in which this definition is used to form families see the 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' standards.

23. This definition of family also forms the basis for defining Income units. Income units are formed either by families or by individuals not in couple or parent/dependent child relationships within a household. Income units differ from families in that related, non-dependent individuals will form separate income units rather than being attached to the family nucleus. For more information see the 'Income unit composition' standard.

24. Because ABS surveys only collect data from dwellings where at least one person aged 15 years or older can be identified, the definition of a family applies an age limit of 15 years and over to at least one member of the family. The definition also restricts the concept of a family to those usually resident in the same household because in most ABS social surveys the household is the unit of sampling. A concept of family which extended beyond the household would allow some individuals to be included in more than one family. In addition to leading to double counting of particular individuals in statistical collections, failure to apply an explicit boundary to the concept would make it difficult for the ABS to measure the number and characteristics of families consistently.

25. Although, for statistical and classificatory reasons, the definition of a family is constrained to a household, the ABS does produce statistics about wider family networks, both in the General Social Survey, and in special purpose statistical collections such as the Family Characteristics Survey. Many aspects of family life are not confined to those who live as part of one household. A major emphasis of the Family Characteristics Survey is on the ways in which members of family networks, who live in different households, give and receive support, thus making it possible to examine areas of support which are applicable to both the household family and the extended family network.

26. The household family, as described in this document and related standards, is the standard for all ABS social surveys. Thus, for the purposes of ABS statistics, a person is not considered a member of a particular family if he or she usually lives in another household, or is an unrelated individual over 15 years of age living in the same household (eg friend, boarder, housekeeper). However, unrelated individuals under 15 years of age living in the same household are treated as family members.

27. Non-family members over 15 years of age living in a family household (such as boarders) are classified as part of a family household for the purposes of 'Household composition', but are not classified as part of the

family for 'Family composition' coding. For further information see the 'Household composition' standard.

28. One area which has been the subject of some discussion is whether or not a same-sex couple relationship should be regarded as the basis for the formation of a family. The ABS makes no judgements about such relationships, but aims to provide an accurate statistical picture of the structures of society to be used as the basis for informed decision making.

29. This is consistent with the recommendations, in relation to the diversity of Australian families, of the National Council for the International Year of the Family in its final report **Creating the Links: Families and Social Responsibility** (1994):

- that the caring responsibilities carried out by all Australians (regardless of their sexual preference) in respect of care for children, aged family members, a sick or disabled family member or partner, be viewed in policy terms as equivalent, and treated as such in all policies concerned with supporting caring responsibilities. (p22)

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30. The four main variables which are used in describing family structure within a household are 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition', 'Household composition', and 'Social marital status'. The standards for each of the variables provide comprehensive information on both conceptual issues and practical issues relating to data collection and processing. Each standard includes a description of the name of the concept, its definitions, the classification criteria, the classification and code structures, a discussion of conceptual issues, standard questionnaire modules, and output classifications for the presentation of data.

Relationship in household

31. 'Relationship in household' is a characteristic of each individual living in a household. It is used to describe the type of familial relationship (if any) an individual has with other individuals in the household. This concept is central to the application of statistical standards on the family and the household because relationships within a household provide the key for identifying families, their type and the number of families that are in the household.

Family composition

32. 'Family composition' differentiates families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency relationships or other relationships. The 'Family composition' standard includes a hierarchical 'Family composition' classification with four levels. At the highest level of the

classification the four family types are:

- couple family without children
- couple family with children
- one parent family
- other family.

33. A second level of detail introduces the concept of dependent children aged under 15 to provide more detail of 'Family composition' within couple and one parent families. A further level of detail distinguishes families with dependent students aged 15-24 years from those with other dependent children. At the most detailed level the presence of non-dependent children is identified in each category of couple and one parent families. Provision has also been made for the separate identification of opposite sex and same sex couples within couple families where this is required.

34. No provision has been made in the 'Family composition' classification for the identification of family members outside the family nucleus. For example a family may contain a couple and their dependent children, but also the parent of one of the couple (a 'Lone ancestor'). Identification of such persons within a family is done by means of 'Relationship in household' data.

Household composition

35. 'Household composition' is used to identify family households, the number of families in a household, the presence of non-family members in family households, and the type of non-family households. Non-family households comprise lone person households and group households. 'Household composition' can be combined in statistical output with 'Family composition' to provide information on families within households. A standard framework for publishing this information is provided in the 'Household composition' and 'Family composition' standards.

Marital Status

36. There are two distinct standard variables for Marital status: 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status', with the latter recommended for most applications. This distinction is in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations (UN) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). (Recommendations for the 1990 Censuses of Population and Housing in the ECE Region, Economic Commission for Europe, 1990 (15-16, 55).)

37. Traditionally 'Registered marital status' (which categorises people as Never Married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated and Married) has been used in most applications. However, with the increase in the number of de facto marriages the concept has become less useful for identifying couple relationships. As 'Social marital status' provides a category for de facto marriages, and classifies people according to their usual living arrangements rather than their registered marital status, this concept can be used to identify couple relationships within a household through the use of one of the standard sets of questions used to identify relationships.

38. A person's 'Social marital status' is determined by whether or not they form a couple relationship with another person and the nature of that couple relationship, regardless of their 'Registered marital status'. The

classification structure has, at its highest level, the categories married and not married. Within married are separate categories for registered and de facto marriage. Within de facto marriage, at the next level of detail, there is a distinction between opposite sex and same sex couples. These are further divided at the next level of detail into male and female same sex couples. Although the classification contains this detail, it is unlikely that information will be published at this level in many statistical collections.

39. As these core variables are all designed to produce and present information about families and households on a consistent basis, they are based on a common set of underlying concepts and rely on a common approach to data collection. In particular, data on 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition', 'Household composition' and 'Social marital status', are obtained from a common set of relationship questionnaire modules. These modules are shown below and presented in full in the 'Relationship in household' standard.

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DEFINITIONS OF COMMON CONCEPTS

40. A number of concepts are common to most of the variables overviewed here. In addition to the family, which is discussed above, these concepts include:

- household
- household and family reference persons
- usual residence
- couple relationship
- child
- child dependency
- nominal child and nominal parent
- income unit

Household

41. The concept of a **household** underpins the collection and dissemination of statistics on families and households. In the ABS a **household** is operationally defined as:

- 'One or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, usually resident in the same

private dwelling'.

42. Thus all private dwellings in Australia by definition contain only one household. This definition of **household** aligns with current ABS practice and makes no significant difference to existing time series data.

Household and family reference persons

43. The concepts of **household** and **family** facilitate the identification of a **household reference person** and **family reference person(s)** who are used as the basis for determining the relationships between the usual residents of the household.

44. The **household reference person** is a household member whose relationship with all other members of the household may be described in terms which identify the composition of the household and are meaningful to family formation. The relationship between each individual and the **household reference person** is also a means of identifying relationships between other members of the household, in order to further clarify household and family composition.

45. A **family reference person** is a household member who forms a family with other members of the household. The identification of **family reference persons** is used to determine the relationships between other family members. As such, the person who is identified as the **family reference person** needs to be the person to whom relationships with all other family members can best be described. In households which contain more than one family, a **family reference person** must be identified for each family. This allows each family living in the household to be treated as a separate entity.

46. As a **family reference person** must be identified for each family in a multifamily household, there needs to be a separate variable associated with each person in the household indicating to which family that person belongs. This variable is referred to as the **family number**. See **The family number** under **Coding Procedures** in 'Relationship in household'.

47. Although the primary use of the concepts of **household** and **family reference persons** is in coding and processing data, the concepts may also be used to form output variables. This occurs when characteristics of the reference person are used as indicators of characteristics of the household. For example, occupation or qualifications of the reference person may be used as an indicator of the socio-economic status of the family or household. Accordingly, it is necessary to have a set of criteria for determining the reference person who is most appropriate for such purposes.

48. In a single family household, the **household reference person** and the **family reference person** are the same person. A standard hierarchic set of criteria is used to determine the most appropriate household member to be the **household reference person**. These criteria are explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard, Appendix A - Identifying household and family reference persons.

49. In multifamily households, where family coding is less straightforward, a more detailed procedure is needed to determine the appropriate reference persons. Once the household members have been allocated to families, the responses provided on the collection form are further processed to determine a reference person for each family. The rules for determining families in multifamily households are explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard, Appendix A - Identifying household and family reference persons.

Usual residence

50. The concept of **usual residence** is used to constrain the description of relationships, family type, household type and social marital status to people who ***usually reside*** with a particular household. Persons who are **temporarily** residing with a household during the survey period and are usual residents of another household are considered to be visitors.

51. The concept of **usual residence** is based on the fact that each person has a basic attachment to a particular dwelling. However, this concept embodies two forms of attachment. The first is attachment to the dwelling in which a person lives the majority of the time, known as 'Usual residence in a dwelling', and the second is attachment to the dwelling which a person considers to be their family home, known as 'Usual residence in a household or family home'. The first concept is used for producing estimates of the usual resident population by geographic area which the Statistician is under a legislative obligation to compile. These estimates are used as the basis for allocating resources. In particular, population estimates based on the Census are used to determine the number of seats allocated to each State and Territory in the House of Representatives and also for the allocation of Financial Assistance Grants by the Australian Government to the States and Territories. The second concept is used in the Monthly Population Survey (MPS) and most other ABS household surveys. It is used for the collection and output of data for units of analysis such as households, families and income units. In operational terms, it is the dwelling a person perceives to be his/her home.

52. Consequently the ABS has two definitions of **usual residence**, as follows:

- the dwelling (address) at which a person has lived or intends to live for a total of six months or more in a calendar year
- the dwelling (address) that the person regards as their 'home'

53. A more detailed explanation of the concept of usual residence and the definitions and applications of the concept can be found in the 'Usual residence - concepts and methods paper' (ABS cat. no. 1389.0) on the ABS Website.

Couple relationship

54. The concept of **couple relationship** is common to all family related variables. A couple relationship exists when:

- two people are usually resident in the same household;
- a social, economic and emotional bonding, usually associated with marriage, exists between the partners; and
- the partners consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union.

55. In most statistical collections it is not practical to ask questions which will determine whether bonding

usually associated with marriage exists between two people. Accordingly, two individuals are regarded as a couple if both are reported as being usually resident in the same household and living together in either a de facto or registered marriage. The formalisation of these living arrangements through a ceremony is not necessary.

56. In practice, a couple relationship is deemed to exist when the relationship between two people usually resident in the same household is reported as: **husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend**. Any relationship label which indicates that a couple relationship exists should be accepted, unless one of two circumstances applies. One, if the relationship is further qualified by the respondent to indicate that he or she does not consider that a couple relationship has been formed. For example, if the respondent indicates that a person is their *boyfriend* and then goes on to say 'but, we aren't de factos', the individuals are treated as unrelated. Two, a relationship between two females described as *girlfriend* is not regarded as evidence of a couple relationship unless one is specifically indicated by the respondent. The word **friend** on its own is not taken to be sufficient evidence that a couple relationship exists. Thus, the definition of a couple relationship is:

- a couple relationship is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage.

57. The restriction of couple relationships to usual residents in a household is a necessary practical consideration for conducting household-based surveys. Therefore, a marriage or partnership between a person usually resident in a household and a person who is a usual resident of another household (a *visitor*) is not recognised in the standards for 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition', 'Household composition' or 'Social marital status'. However, a registered marriage between a person who is usually resident in a household and a person who is a usual resident of another household is recognised in the standard for 'Registered marital status'.

Child

58. In these standards the definition of a child is primarily a function of an individual's relationship to other household members, regardless of age. However, all persons under 15 years of age are defined as children. The identification and classification of children into different types is based on reported relationships and the presence of dependency relationships within the family. It is through the dependency relationships that the definition of a child is broadened beyond the relationship of a natural, adopted, step or foster son or daughter to include otherwise related and unrelated individuals aged under 15.

59. The definition of a child is:

- A person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, or foster son or daughter of a couple or lone parent, usually resident in the same household. A child is also any individual under 15, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent-child relationship with another member of the household. This includes otherwise related children under 15 and unrelated children under 15.
- In order to be classified as a child, the person can have no partner or child of his or her own usually resident in the household.

60. There are three types of child identified in the 'Relationship in household' classification:

- Child under 15
- Dependent student
- Non-dependent child

61. The differentiation of children into these three types is based upon the dependency criterion and is designed to identify families with different structures and needs. Dependency as used in these standards refers to economic dependency and is applied only to the population of people who could be described as 'children'. It is thus not intended to measure an aged or disabled person's dependency.

Dependent child

62. Dependency is assumed to exist when an individual living in a family household is likely to be unable to support himself or herself financially and is thus reliant on another usually resident individual(s) for the provision of his or her financial needs (meals, accommodation, other expenses). As indicators of economic dependency two barriers to full-time employment are used: age and student status.

63. The dependency criterion is applied to two groups of people in slightly different ways: **children under 15** and **dependent students**. The reason for applying it to children under the age of 15 is that persons of this age are not legally able to work full-time and thus cannot support themselves. This criterion applies not only to natural children but also to nephews, nieces, cousins and unrelated children who live with a family.

64. The concept of dependency is further applied to another group of people, those 15-24 years old and studying full-time, who are also assumed to be unable to support themselves financially since, by virtue of their student status, they are generally unable to work enough hours to fully support themselves. In this instance, the dependency criterion is not as widely applied as it is to **children under 15** in that unrelated people who live with a family, and otherwise related family members such as nieces, nephews, cousins etc. who are studying full-time, are assumed to be receiving support from outside the household. Thus only natural, adopted, step, and foster children are defined as dependent students.

65. The ABS has undertaken an extensive review of the concept of child dependency in order to determine both the most appropriate and operationally feasible method of denoting dependency. As the concept of dependency used is one of economic dependency rather than social, legal, psychological, physical or any other form of dependency, it was acknowledged that an actual measure of economic activity would be more accurate than the current student status indicator. However, because of practical collection considerations and the necessity of retaining continuity in time series, the ABS has concluded that it is most appropriate for child dependency to continue to be measured by age and student status.

66. As children over the age of 15, who are not studying full-time, are in a position to be employed full-time, they are classified as non-dependent children.

Nominal child and nominal parent

67. In many households in Australia, the composition of those households and the relationships between

persons in them are more diverse than those generally regarded as being traditional 'nuclear' families. Often the relationship between adults in the household and dependent children (persons aged under 15 or full-time students aged under 25) would not be captured by basic coding methods. This is explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard. In order to better reflect the nature of those relationships, where to all intents and purposes a 'parent-child' relationship exists, and therefore to facilitate a more accurate and analytically useful picture of the 'family-type arrangements' that may exist in those households, the ABS uses the concepts of the 'nominal child' and 'nominal parent'.

68. Where a child under 15 is a usual resident of a dwelling where their parent is not a usual resident, that child must be allocated a 'nominal parent', and in the process becomes a 'nominal child' who is subsequently treated, particularly for output purposes, as identical to a natural, adopted, step or foster child. Full-time students aged 15-24 years are never allocated nominal parents. Consequently if that student is a usual resident of a dwelling where their parent is not a usual resident, the student is unable to be defined as 'dependent'. The student becomes a related (or unrelated) person in that household.

Income unit

69. The economic wellbeing of a person is not always readily apparent from the individual income of that person; an example is the dependent child. However, the family as defined in these standards will in some cases be too broad for use as a basic statistical unit for analysis of income, its level and distribution. Therefore the ABS assumes that there are groups of related persons who, by virtue of their relationships, systematically pool all their income and savings and share equitably in the benefits derived from access to financial resources. These groups of related persons are known as the **income unit**.

70. At the basis of the income unit there is a relationship between persons which is measured by their 'Relationship in household'; persons who are not related do not form income units together but are considered to be single persons with sole command over their income, consumption and savings. Thus in a given household an income unit may be an individual, every person in a family or household, or a group somewhere in between. Income units consist in the first instance of persons in a couple relationship, along with any dependent children. Subsequently lone parent income units are identified. Then any other person aged 15 or over who is not identified as a dependent student forms a separate One person income unit. Finally unattached children under 15 are allocated nominal parents.

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71. In a statistical collection designed to produce information about families, the following steps need to take place in order to process data about families:

- the identification of the usual residents of the household;
- the description of the relationships between the usual residents, by use of an initial household reference person;
- the application of the rules for forming families (see the rules for identifying and coding families in the 'Family composition' standard). At this stage, it may also be necessary to reallocate the household and family reference person(s) depending on the complexity of the household (for further details see the 'Relationship in household' standard, Appendix A - Identifying household and family reference persons); and finally,
- coding of 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition' and other variables, as required.

Collection methods

72. While information on families can be collected using different methodologies it always follows the same sequence:

73. Initially, a 'Household reference person' is identified. This person is the first named person entered on the collection form and is called 'Person 1'. This person is the reference point to which the 'Relationship in household' is anchored. 'Relationship in household' information provides information on 'Social marital status'. Once relationships within the household have been established and coded, reference is made to the ages of children and to further questions about student status asked to determine whether children aged 15-24 years are dependent or not. Next, rules are applied to the relationship and dependency information to enable the

identification and coding of families to establish 'Family composition'. 'Family composition' data can then be used to determine the 'Household composition'. If required, additional questions can be asked to determine 'Registered marital status'.

74. In practice, identification of the 'Household reference person' is either a correction of the identification made in the field, which occurs later during the coding process, or more usually a result of the appropriate person being selected automatically. Automatic selection of 'person 1' can occur in two ways, depending on the method of collection:

- In self-completed collections such as the Census, the instruction on the form is to "Enter the householder or any adult household member as 'Person 1', and if present, the spouse or partner as 'Person 2'";
- In interviewer-based collections, the interviewer instruction is to ask "What are the names of all the people who usually live here?"; as the respondent will usually list themselves first, they become 'Person 1' and thus the household reference person. Note that the Population Surveys Interviewer's Manual allows for the respondent to nominate a different household member as Person 1 and the interviewer is advised to accept this provided that person is a suitable household reference person: for instance, a person aged under 15 years is not suitable.

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75. Following are summaries of the questions asked to ascertain 'Relationship in household'. For more detail on how to apply these questions, see the 'Relationship in household' standard.

Interviewer-based collections

76. The initial requirement in the interviewer based question module is to determine the usual residents of the household. This is achieved by asking the following question:

'What are the names of all the people who usually live here?'

77. Each person named is assigned a row number and a person number. The first person named is identified as Person 1, the second person as Person 2 and so on (see Appendix A, Identifying Family and Household Reference Persons).

78. Q1 below is asked of all usual residents of the household, except for Person 1:

Q1. What is (Your/the Person's) relationship to (Person 1)?

79. Q2 below is then asked only if the response to Q1 is anything OTHER than 'spouse', 'partner', 'father', 'mother', 'son', 'daughter', 'brother' or 'sister' AND there are more than two usual residents in the household. It

enables the identification of additional families within the household. It may be asked of some, all or none of the usual residents of the household.

Q2. Are/Is (You/the Person) more closely related to anyone else in the household? (For example, as a Husband/Wife, Partner or Child.)

80. The remaining question is asked of usual residents of the household. However, the question can be restricted to persons aged between 15-24 years if it is operationally feasible. The question is used to determine whether persons who are 15 to 24 years of age are classified as dependent children or not. In some collections the information obtained from Q3 (and Q4) below on student status is instead obtained from question modules on education topics and where this occurs these questions need not be asked as part of the 'Relationship in household' module.

Q3. Is [the person]/are you currently studying at a school, TAFE college, university or other educational institution as a full-time student?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

81. In collections where data on part-time students are also required, then the following questions are asked instead of the question above:

Q3. Is [the person]/are you currently studying at a school, TAFE college, university or other educational institution?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	to Q4
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	end

Q4. Is [the person]/are you currently studying full-time or part-time?

Full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>

Self-completed collections

82. The standard question module for self-completed collections consists of two questions. Self-completed collections do not have the benefit of an interviewer to help select the appropriate household reference person, and therefore a simple statement should be included as part of the instructions for question 1. In the 2001 Census of Population and Housing, the instructions were:

"Enter the householder or any adult household member as 'Person 1', and if present, the spouse or partner as 'Person 2'."

83. As shown below, using this question does not require a response for Person 1. For each subsequent person, the respondent is required to fill in the appropriate tick box in response to the above instruction. The set of response categories for Person 2 differs from those used for Person 3 and onwards.

Q1. What is the person's relationship to Person 1/Person 2?

Person 1

No answer required.

Person 2

- ☐ Husband or wife of Person 1
- ☐ De facto partner of Person 1
- ☐ Child of Person 1
- ☐ Step-child of Person 1
- ☐ Brother or sister of Person 1
- ☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1
- ☐ Other relationship to Person 1
please specify

Person 3

- ☐ Child of both Person 1 & Person 2
- ☐ Child of Person 1 only
- ☐ Child of Person 2 only
- ☐ Brother or sister of Person 1
- ☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1
- ☐ Other relationship to Person 1
please specify

84. The second question is asked of all usual residents of the household. Responses to the question determine whether any person aged 15 to 24 years is classified as a dependent child.

Q2. Is the person attending a school or any other educational institution?

Include external or correspondence students

- No ☐
- Yes, full-time student ☐
- Yes, part-time student ☐

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This document was added or updated on 23/04/2007.

GLOSSARY

Consensual union

Two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This concept applies to persons in either registered or de facto marriages and includes same-sex couple relationships. In practice, a consensual union exists when the relationship between two people usually resident in the same household is reported as: husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend or girlfriend.

Couple family with children

This is a couple family with children present. It can be expanded to elaborate on the characteristics of those children, such as their number, age and dependency status. This family may or may not include other related individuals.

Couple family without children

This is a couple family with no dependent or non-dependent children present in the family. This family may or may not include other related individuals.

Couple relationship

A couple relationship is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage.

Decree nisi

A decree nisi is a decree granted by a court in the first instance for the dissolution of a registered marriage. It is an interim document issued prior to a decree absolute and refers to the legal condition: "not coming into effect unless a person or persons fail to show cause against it within a certain time".

Though legally persons are not divorced until the issuing of a decree absolute, persons granted a decree nisi are considered to be divorced for the purposes of the 'Registered marital status' classification.

De facto marriage

The relationship between two people who live together in a couple relationship who are not registered as married to each other.

In practice, a de facto marriage exists between a couple of opposite sex when the two people are usual residents in the same household and their relationship is reported as: partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend or when their relationship is reported as husband, wife or spouse and the 'Registered marital status' of one or both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as a category other than married.

A de facto marriage exists between a couple of the same sex when the two people are usual residents in the same household and their relationship is reported as husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover or boyfriend. The term girlfriend should not be used as an indication of a de facto marriage between two females who are usual residents in the same household.

Dependent child

A person aged under 15, or a dependent student.

Dependent student

A full-time student aged 15-24, living in the same usual residence as his or her natural, step, foster or adoptive parent.

Divorced

A person who has formally ended his or her registered marriage by legal means and who has not remarried.
Persons who have obtained a decree nisi are considered to be divorced.

Ever married

A person whose 'Registered marital status' is other than 'Never married'.

Family

Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.

Household

One or more persons usually resident in the same private dwelling.

Income unit

A group of two or more persons who are usually resident in the same household and are related to each other through a couple relationship and/or parent/dependent child relationship; or a person not party to either such relationship.

Lone ancestor

An other related, usually resident, individual who is a Father/Mother or Grandfather/Grandmother. They are, thus, a usually resident parent or grandparent of a person in the household who has already formed a family relationship. To be identified as an other related individual, a person cannot have a spouse or partner usually resident in the household and cannot form a parent-child relationship with any other related individual in the household.

Married

'Married' has a different meaning depending on whether it refers to the concept of 'Social marital status' or the concept of 'Registered marital status'. According to the concept of 'Social marital status', the term married refers to the status of a person who is living with another person in either a registered marriage or a de facto marriage. According to the concept of 'Registered marital status', the term 'married' refers to the status of a person in a legally registered marriage, provided the person is not separated from his or her spouse, even if the spouse is not a usual resident of the same household. If there is any possibility of ambiguity, the term 'registered married' is used in preference to 'married' in relation to 'Registered marital status'.

Married in a de facto marriage

A person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and this relationship is not a registered

marriage.

In practice, a de facto marriage exists between a couple of opposite sex when the two people are usual residents in the same household and their relationship is reported as: partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend or when their relationship is reported as husband, wife or spouse and the 'Registered marital status' of one or both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as a category other than married.

A de facto marriage exists between a couple of the same sex when the two people are usual residents in the same household and their relationship is reported as husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover or boyfriend. The term girlfriend should not be used as an indication of a de facto marriage between two females who are usual residents in the same household.

Married in a registered marriage

A person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and to whom he or she is legally registered as married.

In practice, a person is classified as being a partner in a registered marriage if his or her relationship to a person of the opposite sex, who usually lives in the same household, is reported as: husband, wife or spouse, and the 'Registered marital status' of both partners (if also asked in the collection) is reported as registered married. Under Australian law same-sex couples can not be registered as married and are therefore out of scope of this category.

Never married

A person who has never been a partner in a registered marriage.

Not married

The term 'not married' is used primarily in relation to 'Social marital status' and refers to a person who is not living with another person in either a registered marriage or a de facto marriage. This includes persons who live alone, with other family members, and those in shared accommodation; it also includes persons who are in a registered marriage or in a de facto marriage, but whose partners are not usually resident in the household.

When the term 'not married' is used in the context of 'Registered marital status', it refers to persons whose 'Registered marital status' is never married, widowed or divorced and also includes those who are living with a de facto partner, and must be footnoted as such.

In the context of 'Registered marital status', the term 'not registered married' is generally used in preference to

'not married'.

Not registered married

A person who is currently not a partner in a registered marriage.

It should be noted that this term relates to persons whose 'Registered marital status' is reported as never married, widowed or divorced and that the use of this term is preferable, in the context of 'Registered marital status', to the term 'not married'.

One parent family

A family consisting of a lone parent with at least one dependent or non-dependent child (regardless of age) who is also usually resident in the family. This family type may or may not include other related individuals.

The one parent family concept can be expanded to elaborate on the characteristics of the children, such as whether they are dependent children or not and for dependent children whether they are aged under 15 or are dependent students.

Examples of one parent families include: a 25-year-old parent with dependent children; and an 80-year-old parent living with a 50-year-old child.

Other family

A family of related individuals residing in the same household. These individuals do not form a couple or parent-child relationship with any other person in the household and are not related to a couple or one parent family in the household.

If two brothers, for example, are living together and neither is a partner, a lone parent or a child to someone else in the household, and neither is related to any person in the household who is in a couple or one-parent family, then they are classified as an other family. However, if the two brothers share the household with the daughter of one of the brothers and her husband, then both brothers are attached to the couple family and classified as other related individuals.

Partner

A person in a couple relationship with another person usually resident in the same household. The couple relationship may be in either a registered or de facto marriage and includes same-sex couples.

'Registered marital status'

An individual's current status in regard to a registered marriage, ie. whether he or she is widowed, divorced, separated, married or never married. The partners in a registered marriage must be of the opposite sex as

under Australian law same-sex relationships cannot be registered.

Registered married

A legally registered married person not separated from his/her spouse, even if the spouse is not a usual resident of the same household.

Relationship in household

The relationship of each person in a family to the family reference person or where a person is not part of a family that person's relationship to the household reference person.

Same-sex couple

Two persons of the same sex who form a couple relationship and are usually resident in the same household.

Separated

A person who is a partner in a registered marriage, but has parted from his or her spouse, and has not yet divorced.

'Social marital status'

'Social marital status' is the relationship status of an individual with reference to another person who is usually resident in the household. A marriage exists when two people live together as husband and wife, or partners, regardless of whether the marriage is formalised through registration. Individuals are, therefore, regarded as married if they are in a de facto marriage, or if they are living with the person to whom they are registered as married.

Widowed

A person whose spouse in a registered marriage has died and who has not remarried

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1. 'Relationship in household' underlies the suite of standards for Family statistics. It identifies and classifies the key relationships between persons usually resident in a given household. Although some collections output directly to the classification of 'Relationship in household', its major use is in providing the basis for derivation of 'Family composition', 'Income unit composition', 'Household composition' and 'Social marital status'. The 'Relationship in household' standard facilitates the definition, collection and classification of household relationship data in statistical collections.

2. It is important to note that the variable does not and can not identify all the relationships present in a given household. Primarily, the relationships classified by this variable are those between a particular individual called the **reference person** and each other member of the household. Persons other than the reference person may, in some collections, also identify a single closer relationship to one other member of the household, if such a relationship exists. The **household reference person** is thus used as the basis for the identification of income units and families and the classification of the household.

3. Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary section of the 'Overview of family, household and income unit standards'.

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NAME OF VARIABLE

4. The name of the variable is 'Relationship in household'.

DEFINITION OF THE VARIABLE

NOMINAL DEFINITION

5. The variable 'Relationship in household' is defined as:

- the familial and other relationships between persons in a given household.

6. 'Relationship in household' is an attribute of the counting unit 'person'.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

7. Operationally, 'Relationship in household' is defined as the relationship of all persons in a family to the family reference person or where a person is not part of a family that person's relationship to the household reference person, and the relationships between family reference persons and the household reference person.

8. 'Relationship in household' describes the familial and non-familial relationships of each person within each family or household. In family households, familial relationships within each family are measured with respect to a family reference person chosen for that particular family. In multi-family households, relationships are determined with respect to a household reference person, chosen from the family reference persons. In non-family households, relationships are determined with respect to a household reference person. Initially the household reference person is either the respondent or the person nominated by the respondent as Person 1 on the collection form; in many cases, not only will they be one and the same, but further processing will confirm their position as the household reference person. See Appendix A for details on identifying Family and Household Reference Persons.

9. The following points concern operationalising the definition:

- For all households a household reference person is identified. If only one family is present in the household, the family reference person will also be the household reference person.
- The family reference person can be described as having a 'Relationship in household' with all other members of the family; however, if it is necessary to use a term for the reference person's relationship to themselves, that term is 'Self'.
- In households where there are no families present, all relationships are identified with respect to the household reference person.
- In family households, each family has its own family reference person. If there is more than one family in the household, the family of the household reference person is the Primary family or Family 1.
- In households with more than one family, the family reference persons of the non-Primary families describe their 'Relationship in household' to the household reference person. The household reference person if necessary has a 'Relationship in household' of 'Self'.
- Where the question module allows it, the identification of any closer relationship a person has to a member of the household other than person 1 allows for the correct identification of the number and composition of families and income units within a household.
- Natural, step, adoptive and foster relationships are all treated the same.

10. A household can comprise more than one family, as defined. Family households can include unrelated individuals. Since any household where any family relations exist among its members is a family household, Lone person and Group households never include related persons.

Scope of the variable

11. 'Relationship in household' applies to all usual residents of a household. Households can be family households, group households, or lone person households.

12. Visitors are outside the scope of this classification as they are not usual residents of the selected household. However, in collections such as the Census where information is collected about visitors, they can be identified by use of a supplementary code.

Supporting variables

13. The following supporting variables are required for deriving 'Relationship in household':

- 'Age',
- 'Sex',
- 'Full-time/part-time student status'.
- Family number

14. Additionally, as members of a household must be usual residents of the dwelling in question, persons usually resident in the dwelling must be identified.

15. In collections where it is necessary to distinguish between registered and de facto marriages, 'Registered marital status' is a required supporting variable for 'Relationship in household'. However, for some collections the distinction in the classification of 'Social marital status' between 'married' and 'not married' is sufficient and therefore those surveys need not ascertain 'Registered marital status'.

DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

16. Notions of what constitutes a family vary considerably. Some people consider their family to be the relatives with whom they live. Others extend their definition of family to include relatives who live in other dwellings. For some, the notion of family includes people who are unrelated. As ABS social surveys are based on the household, to obtain a measure of the number of families it is necessary for practical reasons to restrict the concept of family usually used in those surveys to include only those persons usually resident in the same household. A concept of family which extended beyond the household would make it impossible to identify discrete family units for the purposes of measuring the number of families and describing their characteristics. Where other concepts of the family are measured, usually in family-specific ABS surveys, the concept of family as defined in this standard and 'Family composition' is still collected as well.

17. Because the 'Relationship in household' variable serves primarily as a vehicle to enable coding and classification of families and households, rather than as a variable which is mainly intended to provide output in its own right, the technical means by which relationships are captured by the ABS vary between different surveys. Specifically, the use of a Computer Assisted Interviewing system for household surveys, compared with a paper self-completed form for the Census, have led to a wide variation in the manner in which 'Relationship in household' data are captured between the two. An effect of this variation is that 'Relationship in household' data captured for most household surveys is at a less detailed level than that for the Census and is not easily assigned to the full 'Relationship in household' classification or its standard output classification; nor are the two input classifications similar enough to be reconciled. Therefore the section of this Standard on Standard Input Categories provides two collection-method-specific input classifications, and the Standard Classification and Code Structure apply primarily to self-completed collections such as the Census.

18. The household and family structures used by the ABS to report collection results may not adequately reflect the social and family relationships relevant in the Indigenous population of Australia. However, they do provide a comparison with the 'Family composition' and 'Household composition' of the non-Indigenous population.

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THE CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

19. Categories for 'Relationship in household' are based on the following criteria (in order of importance):

- Whether the person is in a Couple relationship
- If so, whether the relationship is a registered marriage
- Whether the person is in a Parent-child relationship
- Whether the person is a Dependent child
- Whether the person is in an Other family relationship
- If so, the precise nature of that relationship
- Sex
- Family number

Couple relationship

20. Couple relationship denotes two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This includes same-sex couples.

Parent-child relationship

21. Parent-child relationships exist between a 'parent' and that person's 'child', both of whom must be usual residents in the same dwelling. A parent must be 15 years of age or over. A child can be any age and related

to the parent through birth, adoption, step family or fostering.

22. In ABS standards for household and family statistics, a child is defined as:

- A person of any age who is a natural, adopted, step, or foster son or daughter of a couple or lone parent, usually resident in the same household. A child is also any individual less than 15 years of age, usually resident in the household, who forms a parent-child relationship with another member in the household. This includes otherwise related children and unrelated children under 15.

23. A child under 15 years of age who does not have a parent (natural, adopted, step or foster) usually resident in the same household is a 'dependent child' and is assigned to an adult in that household who is deemed to be that child's 'nominal parent'; in the process the child becomes a 'nominal child'. Full-time students aged between 15 and 24 are never allocated nominal parents. Consequently if that student is a usual resident of a dwelling where their parent is not a usual resident, the student is unable to be defined as 'dependent'. The student becomes a related (or unrelated) person in that household. Rules for allocation of a nominal parent to a nominal child are located in the 'Family composition' standard.

24. Where a person aged 15 or over is a partner in a couple relationship or has a child usually resident in the household those relationships take precedence over the person's relationship with their own parents. Such persons are not classified as children. A person whose child is not usually resident in the household does not have a 'Relationship in household' to that child, so such a person's relationships within the household apply.

Dependent child

25. There are three broad categories of child included in the 'Relationship in household' classification:

- Child under 15
- Dependent student
- Non-dependent child

26. Dependency in ABS standards refers to nominally economic dependency only. Age and student status determine dependency for this purpose on the assumption that children under 15 and full time students aged 15-24 years are unlikely to be able to support themselves. Children are classified as dependent if they form a parent child relationship and:

- they are 0-14 years of age; or
- they are 15-24 years of age and also a full-time student (in secondary or tertiary education).

Other family relationship

27. An 'Other family relationship' is any familial or marital relationship between two people excluding couple relationships and parent-child relationships. Other family relationships include relationships between generations (e.g. Grandparents and grandchildren). Lineal relations of this kind may pass through any number of generations.

28. Other family relationships also include first cousins, i.e. persons related through one common set of grandparents, but not second cousins and beyond. A full list of the familial relationships that fall within the

scope of an 'other family relationship' is given in the Coding procedures section of the 'Family composition' standard.

Sex

29. Sex is used to determine 'Husband, wife or partner' categories in the 'Relationship in household' classification. Partners in a registered marriage must be of the opposite sex. Same-sex couples are considered to be in a de facto relationship as they cannot, by Australian law, be registered as married or hold a marriage certificate with each other.

THE STANDARD CLASSIFICATION AND CODE STRUCTURE

30. 'Relationship in household' is a four level hierarchical classification. The categories are as follows:

- 1 Husband, wife or partner
 - 11 In a registered marriage
 - 12 In a de facto marriage
 - 15 Opposite-sex couple
 - 16 Same-sex couple
 - 17 Male same-sex couple
 - 18 Female same-sex couple
- 2 Lone parent
 - 21 Lone parent
- 3 Child under 15
 - 31 Natural or adopted child under 15
 - 32 Step child under 15
 - 33 Foster child under 15
 - 34 Grandchild
 - 35 Otherwise related child under 15
 - 36 Unrelated child under 15
- 4 Dependent student
 - 41 Natural or adopted dependent student
 - 42 Student step child
 - 43 Student foster child
- 5 Non-dependent child
 - 51 Non-dependent natural or adopted child
 - 52 Non-dependent step child
 - 53 Non-dependent foster child
- 6 Other related individual

- 61 Brother/sister
 - 62 Father/mother
 - 63 Non-dependent grandchild
 - 64 Grandfather/grandmother
 - 65 Cousin
 - 66 Uncle/Aunt
 - 67 Nephew/niece
 - 69 Other related individual not elsewhere classified
- 7 Non-family member
 - 71 Unrelated individual living in a family household
 - 72 Group household member
 - 73 Lone person

31. Detailed categories of the classification (ie. codes 15-18) are coded using two digits rather than three or four. This is because it is rare for ABS surveys to make the distinction between same-sex and opposite-sex couples. It is also consistent with the way de facto couples are coded in the 'Social marital status' and 'Family composition' classifications.

Residual codes

32. In the broad level 'Other related individual', category 69 is reserved as a residual category. It contains all Other related individuals not elsewhere classified. Examples of relationships in this category include Great Uncle and Second Cousin.

Supplementary codes

33. It is recommended that the special supplementary codes 9 and 99 be used to code responses of 'Visitor' in collections in which visitors to a household are considered in scope of the collection. This allows the information to be retained, while maintaining the distinction between usual residents of a household and visitors.

34. Census uses an additional supplementary code 'VV' to identify overseas visitors.

SCOPE OF THE CLASSIFICATION

35. The 'Relationship in household' classification applies to all usual residents of a dwelling.

APPLICATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION TO OTHER VARIABLES

36. The categories of the classification can be output in their own right or cross-classified by a range of other socio-demographic variables.

37. A major purpose of this classification is as the basis for identification of income units and families, statistical units that are important for further analysis. The output of the 'Relationship in household' classification is used directly as input to the 'Income unit composition', 'Family composition' and 'Household composition' classifications.

CODING PROCEDURES

38. Data captured on relationships are allocated to the 'Relationship in household' classification in output processing.

39. Relationships to the selected Person 1 are coded, enabling the family units existing in the household to be identified. Subsequent examination of the families thus formed shows whether Person 1 satisfies the criteria for a household reference person. Rules for forming families can be found in the 'Family composition' standard. The categories used in allocating responses are shown in the Standard Input Categories section of the Standard.

40. It is possible to distinguish between de facto and registered marriages by eliciting additional information on the 'Registered marital status' of persons in a couple relationship. For more details, see the 'Social marital status' standard. However, in most surveys the distinction between registered and de facto relationships is not required.

Step and in-law relationships

41. To be coded as a step child a person must be identified as the step son or step daughter of one or both partners in a couple family or as the step child of the lone parent in a one-parent family. In self-completed collections, this is wherever a person is identified as the child of one but not both persons in a couple relationship, or where the child is specifically identified as a stepchild of either one of the persons in a couple relationship or a lone parent. However, in standard coding in most household surveys, the step child becomes indistinguishable from any other type of child once a code is allocated.

42. Similarly in these household surveys a person who is coded as a step-parent or step-sibling becomes indistinguishable from any other type of parent or sibling once a code is allocated.

43. In self-completed collections a person who responds as a step relative or an in-law, and who does not form a couple or parent-child relationship (i.e. is not part of a separate family), will be coded to the appropriate type of relationship in the 'Other related individual' codes (60-67 and 69). Thus, if a household is composed of a reference person (husband), wife, daughter, son, and mother-in-law, the mother-in-law will be coded to 62 Father/Mother. Effectively this means that, for couple families, the relationship is expressed as the relationship to either member of a family nucleus.

The family number

44. Separate families living in the same household are treated as separate units by the 'Relationship in household' classification. The immediate implication of this is that there must be a separate numerical identifier associated with each person in the household indicating to which family that person belongs. This

identifier is referred to as 'Family number'.

45. The 'Family number' identifier allows for up to nine separate families to be coded from the 'Relationship in household' data. A single digit code 0-9 is assigned to each person to indicate the family to which each person belongs. The code '0' is assigned to persons who are not members of families. The code '1' is assigned to all family members in one-family households, or to members of the first family in multi-family households. The code '2' is assigned to members of the second family in multi-family households, and so on. The total number of families which can effectively be identified in a given collection may be limited by certain operational constraints. For example, at present a limit of 7 families will be coded in ABS household surveys as a maximum of 15 usual residents can be entered into the survey instrument.

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STANDARD QUESTION MODULES

46. The method of obtaining data on 'Relationship in household' is direct question. The standard questions for this variable are documented below.

Interviewer-based collections

47. The initial requirement in the interviewer based question module is to determine the usual residents of the household. This is achieved by asking the following question:

'What are the names of all the people who usually live here?'

48. Each person named is assigned a row number and a person number. The first person named is identified as Person 1, the second person as Person 2 and so on (see Appendix A, Identifying Family and Household Reference Persons).

49. Q1 below is asked of all usual residents of the household, except for Person 1:

Q1. What is (Your/the Person's) relationship to (Person 1)?

50. Q2 below is then asked only if the response to Q1 is anything OTHER than 'spouse', 'partner', 'father', 'mother', 'son', 'daughter', 'brother' or 'sister' AND there are more than two usual residents in the household. It enables the identification of additional families within the household. It may be asked of some, all or none of the usual residents of the household.

Q2. Are/Is (You/the Person) more closely related to anyone else in the household? (For example, as a Husband/Wife, Partner or Child.)

51. For interviewer-based collections, it is important that interviewer instructions are adapted to ensure that same-sex relationships are treated appropriately. These instructions should explicitly state that interviewers should not ask whether any household members form a same-sex de facto relationship. The instructions should also state that, if identified by appropriate means, persons in such relationships are to be reported as de facto partners.

52. It is not necessary to ask specific questions of a personal nature to identify couple relationships. The identification of de facto couples (including same-sex couples) is reliant on respondents volunteering this information in reply to general questions about relationships between members of the household. More detailed questioning on this subject is considered intrusive.

53. The remaining questions are asked of usual residents of the household. However, they can be restricted to persons aged between 15-24 years if it is operationally feasible. The following question is used to determine whether persons who are 15 to 24 years of age are dependent children. In some collections the information obtained from Q3 (and Q4) below on student status is instead obtained from question modules on education topics and where this occurs these questions need not be asked as part of the 'Relationship in household' module.

Q3. Is [the person]/are you currently studying at a school, TAFE college, university or other educational institution as a full-time student?

Yes ☐
No ☐

54. In collections where data on part-time students are also required, then the following questions are asked instead of the question above:

Q3. Is [the person]/are you currently studying at a school, TAFE college, university or other educational institution?

Yes ☐ to Q4

No ☐ end

Q4. Is [the person]/are you currently studying full-time or part-time?

Full-time ☐
Part-time ☐

Self-completed collections

55. The standard question module for self-completed collections consists of two questions.

56. Self-completed collections do not have the benefit of an interviewer to help select the appropriate household reference person. Therefore, a simple statement should be included as part of the instructions for question 1. In the 2001 Census of Population and Housing, the instructions were:

"Enter the householder or any adult household member as 'Person 1', and if present, the spouse or partner as 'Person 2'."

57. As shown below, using this question does not require a response for Person 1. For each subsequent person, the respondent is required to fill in the appropriate tick box in response to the above instruction. The set of response categories for Person 2 differs from those used for Person 3 and onwards.

Q1. What is the person's relationship to Person 1/Person 2?

Person 1
No answer required.

Person 2

- ☐ Husband or wife of Person 1
- ☐ De facto partner of Person 1
- ☐ Child of Person 1
- ☐ Step-child of Person 1
- ☐ Brother or sister of Person 1
- ☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1
- ☐ Other relationship to Person 1
please specify

Person 3

- ☐ Child of both Person 1 & Person 2
- ☐ Child of Person 1 only
- ☐ Child of Person 2 only
- ☐ Brother or sister of Person 1
- ☐ Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1
- ☐ Other relationship to Person 1
please specify

58. The second question is asked of all usual residents of the household. Responses to the question determine whether any person aged 15 to 24 years is classified as a dependent child.

Q2. Is the person attending a school or any other educational institution?

Include external or correspondence students

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes, full-time student | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Yes, part-time student | <input type="checkbox"/> |

STANDARD INPUT CATEGORIES

59. 'Relationship in household' data, as originally collected, are dependent upon whom the respondent nominates as Person 1. Usually the selected Person 1 proves to be an appropriate reference person on which to base 'Family composition' coding. However as this is not always the case, for example when a non-dependent child is selected rather than that person's parent, raw data must be further processed in order to obtain the input categories of the 'Relationship in household' classification (see Appendix A, Substituting a suitable reference person).

60. As mentioned in the section on 'Discussion of Conceptual Issues' above, the input categories for 'Relationship in household' vary according to the method of collection used, as follows:

Interviewer-based collections

61. The 'Relationship in household' categories used for household surveys are designed specifically as input for the process of family formation. Any requirement for detailed 'Relationship in household' data to be obtained from household surveys necessitates asking for additional information and would usually only take place in the context of a household survey which is intended to investigate such issues.

62. The input categories used for household surveys are as follows. They describe the relationships of persons in the household to the person identified as Person 1 on the household form, who may not be the appropriate Reference Person. No code numbers are given for the categories because any codes relating to the category names are used only for processing those categories into family formations. There are nine groups of categories.

Household reference person

Husband
Wife
Spouse
Partner

Boyfriend
De facto husband
Girlfriend
De facto wife
Fiance
Lover

Son
Step-son
Adopted son
Foster son
Daughter
Step-daughter
Adopted daughter
Foster daughter

Father
Step-father
Adopted father
Foster father
Mother
Step-mother
Adopted mother
Foster mother

Brother
Step-brother
Adopted brother
Foster brother
Half-brother
Sister
Step-sister
Adopted sister
Foster sister
Half-sister

Son in-law
Grandson
Daughter in-law
Granddaughter

Father in-law
Brother in-law
Uncle
Grandfather
Great-uncle
Great-grandfather
Nephew
Great-grandson
Great-nephew
Mother in-law
Sister in-law
Aunt

Grandmother
Great-aunt
Great-grandmother
Niece
Great-granddaughter
Great-niece
Guardian
Cousin
Ward

Boarder
Not applicable
Not related

Self-completed collections

63. The standard input categories used for 'Relationship in household' in self-completed collections are the level 2 categories of the 'Relationship in household' classification. For operational reasons, the supplementary codes 9 and 99 are used to code responses of 'Visitor' when they are considered in scope of the collection. Census uses an additional supplementary code 'VV' to identify overseas visitors.

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STANDARD OUTPUT CATEGORIES

64. The following are the recommended standard output categories for data on 'Relationship in household'. It should be noted that these standard outputs are only for use in self-completed collections because the input classification is not the same for household surveys as it is for self-completed collections such as the Census:

Output using majority of the standard classification

Husband, wife or partner
 In a registered marriage
 In a de facto marriage

Lone parent
 Lone parent

Child under 15
 Natural or adopted child under 15
 Step child under 15
 Foster child under 15
 Grandchild
 Otherwise related child under 15
 Unrelated child under 15

Dependent student

- Natural or adopted dependent student
- Non-dependent step child
- Non-dependent foster child

Other related individual

- Brother/Sister
- Father/Mother
- Non-dependent grandchild
- Grandfather/Grandmother
- Cousin
- Uncle/Aunt
- Nephew/Niece
- Other related individual (n.e.c.)

Non-family member

- Unrelated individual in family household
- Group household member
- Lone person

Visitor

- Visitor

65. It is also standard to aggregate data from these categories as follows:

- output classified by family member and non-family member,
- output aggregating dependent children,
- output using 'Family composition'.

66. Footnotes and/or glossary entries must document the standard output categories which comprise each aggregated output category.

Output classified by family member and non-family member

Family member

- Husband, wife or partner
- Lone parent
- Child under 15
- Dependent student
- Non-dependent child
- Other related individual

Non-family member

- Unrelated individual in family household
- Group household member

Lone person

67. Visitors are not included in this output aggregation.

Output aggregating dependent children

68. The two categories 'Child under 15' and 'Dependent student' are aggregated to form a single output category of 'Dependent child'.

Husband, wife or partner

In a registered marriage

In a de facto marriage

Lone parent

Lone parent

Dependent child

Dependent natural or adopted child

Dependent step child

Dependent foster child

Grandchild under 15

Otherwise related child under 15

Unrelated child under 15

Non-dependent child

Non-dependent natural or adopted child

Non-dependent step child

Non-dependent foster child

Other related individual

Brother/Sister

Father/Mother

Non-dependent grandchild

Grandfather/Grandmother

Cousin

Uncle/Aunt

Nephew/Niece

Other related individual (n.e.c.)

Non-family member

Unrelated individual in family household

Group household member

Lone person

Visitor

Output using 'Family composition'

69. Where appropriate it is also standard to combine output of 'Relationship in household' with 'Family composition'. Note that for collections where 'Children under 15' are out of scope, such as ABS Labour Force collections, the category 'Child under 15' may be omitted.

Family member

Husband, wife or partner

With children under 15

With no children under 15 and with dependent students

With non-dependent children only

Without children

Lone parent

With children under 15

With no children under 15 and with dependent students

With non-dependent children only

Child under 15

Dependent student

Non-dependent child

Other related individual

Non-family member

Lone person

Not living alone

70. It is possible also to further aggregate the above table as follows:

Family member

Husband, wife or partner

Lone parent

Child under 15

Dependent student

Non-dependent child

Other related individual

Non-family member
Lone person
Not living alone

Mandatory footnotes and other output information

71. Although all output stated above is standard, there are additional mandatory requirements for footnotes and glossary entries. This and some further information is summarised below.

- There must be glossary definitions for every standard output label used.
- The separate identification of same-sex couple families is not recommended for standard output because the reporting of same-sex couple relationships is likely to be low. The data is thus expected to be statistically insignificant, to exhibit high standard error and potentially to breach confidentiality requirements in some collections.
- The abbreviation 'n.e.c.' must be footnoted with the explanation 'not elsewhere classified'.
- The categories 'With children under 15', 'With no children under 15 and with dependent students' and 'With non-dependent children only' are mutually exclusive; the category 'With children under 15' may or may not include the presence of dependent students and non-dependent children; similarly the category 'With no children under 15 and with dependent students' may or may not include non-dependent children.
- The category 'Not living alone' is an aggregation of two categories from the standard classification: 'Unrelated individual in family household' and 'Group household member'. This must be stated in a footnote or explained by a glossary entry for 'Not living alone'.
- The distinction between step child and the other types of child is optional, and depends on whether this information is available from the response data.

RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

72. The 'Relationship in household' classification is closely linked to the following standard classifications:

'Family composition'
'Household composition'
'Registered marital status'
'Social marital status'
'Income unit composition'

73. Changes to any of these classifications cannot be considered in isolation and all possible ramifications concerning the other classifications should be investigated before any change is adopted.

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Introduction

1. Collection of household and family composition data relies on a respondent from the household. In order to identify all the usual residents of a household, the respondent is asked to list them in order beginning with 'Person 1'. In practice, the respondent will usually be Person 1, but this is not always the case.

2. In most cases the selected Person 1 will prove to be appropriate as the **household reference person**. However, this is not certain until preliminary relationship coding has taken place. A **household reference person** is used as the basis for the identification of income units and families and the classification of the household. Relationships in the household are formed through taking Person 1 and then describing each other person's relationship to Person 1; this process will show whether the selected Person 1 is appropriate to be the **household reference person**.

3. Families identified through application of 'Relationship in household' each have a **family reference person**. In a single family household, the **household reference person** and the **family reference person** are the same person. In multi-family households there is a **family reference person** for each family and then one of the family reference persons is also designated as a **household reference person**. Once household and family reference persons have been properly identified according to the criteria below, it can be determined whether relationships within the household require recoding (where Person 1 has not been an appropriate **household reference person**) or that the relationships already coded can be confirmed.

Procedure

4. To collect 'Relationship in household' data all usual residents of the household must be identified. The relationships of all usual residents of the household to the first usual resident named are identified. Then for each usual resident any closer relationships to any other usual resident are identified. The relationships described are used to establish whether there are any families present in the household. If there are any families present, a **family reference person** is selected for each family. If there are families present, a **household reference person** is selected from among the **family reference persons**. If there are no families present, a **household reference person** is chosen according to the non-family criteria described below.

Standard hierarchical set of criteria for identifying reference persons

5. Reference persons must be aged 15 years or over and are identified according to:

family criterion

- one of the partners in a registered or de facto marriage; or
- lone parent; or

non-family criteria

- the person with the highest income; or
- the owner, purchaser or primary rent payer of the household accommodation; or
- the eldest person

Interviewer-based collections

6. The initial requirement in the interviewer based question module is to determine the usual residents of the household. This is achieved by asking the following question:

'What are the names of all the people who usually live here?'

7. Each person named is assigned a row number and a person number. The first person named is identified as Person 1, the second person as Person 2 and so on.

Self-completed collections

8. Respondents are prompted with instructions to help select a suitable household reference person as the

first person listed on self-completion collection forms as this facilitates family coding and minimises subsequent re-processing. For example, in the 2001 Census of Population and Housing the instruction given is:

'Enter the householder or any adult household member as 'Person 1', and if present, the spouse or partner as 'Person 2'.

9. Once again, a suitable reference person can be substituted during data processing if the nominated person proves an unsuitable household reference person, for example, where a child is entered as Person 1.

SUBSTITUTING A SUITABLE REFERENCE PERSON

10. In many cases, the person nominated as Person 1 will prove to be a suitable reference person.

11. There will be times when Person 1 is not the most suitable person to be the reference person because he or she does not fulfil the criteria for determining the household reference person. The household reference person, whilst primarily a device to assist coding and processing relationship data, can also be used to create output variables (e.g. occupation of household reference person). It is therefore necessary to use the set of hierarchical criteria for identifying reference persons so that the criteria are consistently applied to determine the household reference person. Depending upon the methodology being used to collect relationship data, this substitution of an appropriate reference person for an inappropriate one can be done after the collection of data, or through an input editing system.

One family households

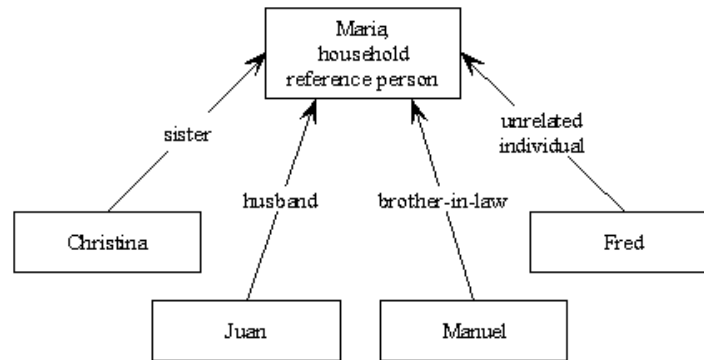
12. Where a person who is not appropriate to be the household reference person has been nominated as Person 1, the relationships described in the raw data may be unsuitable for determining 'Relationship in household'. For example, if the household reference person is a son in a one family household comprised of his mother, father and sister the data would need to be processed so that one of the parents is the household reference person and each other family member is described in relation to that parent. This reallocation of the household reference person is required for more efficient 'Relationship in household' coding, since the classification is designed to classify children in relation to their parents, rather than parents in relation to their children.

Multi-family households

13. Another case when the household reference person may need to be modified is in a multi-family household. Multi-family households constitute only a small proportion of the total number of households. In the 2001 Census, only 0.9% of households were identified as multi-family households.

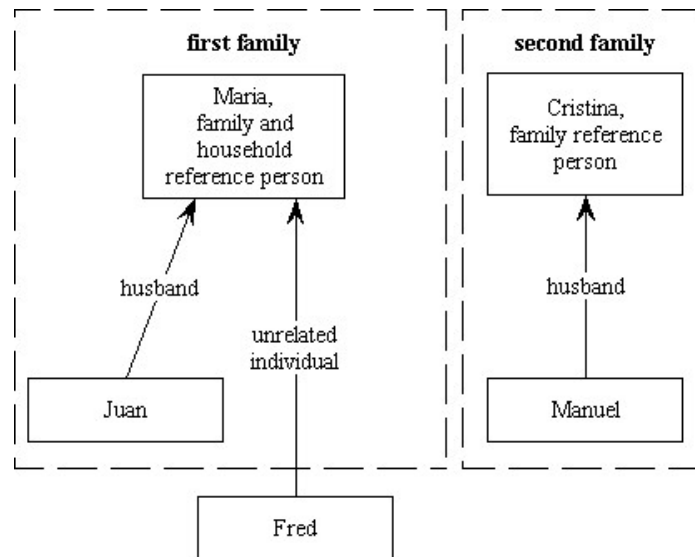
14. In households that contain more than one family, a family reference person must be identified for each family. The following example illustrates how further processing is required when the second question (on any closer relationships) is asked. Consider a five person household consisting of two sisters (Maria and Christina), their respective husbands (Juan and Manuel) and an unrelated individual (Fred). If Maria is chosen as the household reference person then Manuel is coded as a brother-in-law (see diagram 1).

Diagram 1



15. At the family level, however, the household is considered as consisting of two families and as Maria is initially selected as Person 1 and therefore the household reference person, either Christina or Manuel must be chosen as the family reference person for the second family (see diagram 2).

Diagram 2



16. Note that question two in the interviewer based question module (see the Standard Question Module above) reveals a two family household if any of the four persons in either family is chosen as Person 1. In this example, when the correct procedures are applied and the best choice is made for the household reference person, a two family household is quickly identified with each family being coded as a couple family without children having no other related individuals in the household. In the example, Fred is an unrelated individual living in a family household. Note also that if Fred were chosen as Person 1, even though the second question would eventually establish a two family household, the existence of the sibling relationship between Maria and

Christina would not be detected.

SELECTING A HOUSEHOLD REFERENCE PERSON

17. Once the household members have been allocated to families (assuming there are families present), the responses provided on the collection form are further processed so that a reference person is chosen for each family. For clarification of the rules for determining families in multi-family households refer to 'Rules for Identifying Families' in the standard for 'Family composition'.

18. To select each family reference person the standard hierarchical set of criteria for identifying reference persons is applied to each family from the top down. Only then is one of the family reference persons designated as the household reference person. To select the household reference person in a multi-family household, a further set of hierarchical criteria (which follows the standard hierarchic set of criteria for identifying reference persons) are applied to the family reference persons as follows:

family criterion - one of the partners in a registered or de facto marriage

- If only one of the family reference persons is a partner in a couple relationship, that reference person is selected as the household reference person.
- If more than one family reference person is a partner in a couple relationship, the reference person with dependent children is chosen.
- If more than one partner has dependent children present, or none of the marriage partners has dependent children present, the non-family criteria (income, owner with or without a mortgage, primary renter, eldest person) are applied to the married family reference persons, in the order stated above so that one household reference person is chosen.

family criterion - a lone parent

- If none of the family reference persons is in a registered or de facto marriage, a lone parent is chosen.
- If more than one lone parent is present the non-family criteria (income, owner with or without a mortgage, primary rent payer, eldest person) are applied to the lone parent reference persons, in the order stated above so that one household reference person is chosen.

non-family criteria

- If none of the family reference persons has been chosen on the basis of the family criteria (one partner in a registered or de facto marriage, a lone parent) or there are no family reference persons, the remaining non-family criteria (income, owner with or without a mortgage, primary rent payer, eldest person) are applied in the order stated above so that one household reference person is chosen.

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1. The standard variable 'Family composition' identifies the composition of families within households. It is used to measure family structure and size and is an essential variable for the analysis of the social and economic well-being of both the family unit and the individuals within those families.

2. This standard variable should be used for all collections which aim to identify the structure of families within households. Other related standard variables are 'Relationship in household', 'Household composition', 'Registered marital status', 'Social marital status' and 'Income unit composition'.

3. The 'Family composition' standard replaces the ABS Standard Variable 'Family type' which was first published in 1995 in **Standards for Statistics on the Family** (Cat No. 1286.0). An ABS review of family and household standards identified the desirability of streamlining the family classification and output structures; however the categories of the 'Family composition' classification are fully compatible with those of the 'Family type' classification which it replaces. The 'Family composition' standard also specifies the procedures and rules required to allocate related household members to families when more than one family is identified in a household.

4. Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary section of the 'Overview of family, household and income unit standards'.

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This document was added or updated on 23/04/2007.

UNDERLYING CONCEPTS

NAME OF THE VARIABLE

5. The name of the variable is 'Family composition'.

DEFINITION OF THE VARIABLE

Nominal definition

6. The nominal definition of 'Family composition' is more restrictive than the ordinary notion of the term 'family' which generally includes relatives whether they live together or not. This is because in survey research it is necessary to place some physical bound on the extent of family for the purely pragmatic purpose of being able to collect family data. Consequently the ABS has adopted a more restricted definition of 'family' as the basis for determining 'Family composition'.

7. The concept of 'family' is defined as:

- Two or more related people who usually live together.

8. This definition illustrates three fundamental bounds on the concept of Family at a broad level. These restrictions are:

- a family must consist of more than one person,
- family members must be related,
- family members must live in the same household.

9. Families can be differentiated using many identifiable characteristics such as the number of children in the family or the size of the family. This standard makes it possible for families to be identified and further differentiated into different types of families based upon certain relationships between members of the family.

10. The variable 'Family composition' is nominally defined as:

- The composition of the family based on the relationships between family members usually resident in the same household.

11. 'Family composition' is an attribute of the counting unit 'family', and by extension of the counting unit 'person' for all persons who are members of families.

Operational definition

12. Operationally, 'family' is defined as:

- Two or more persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. The basis of a family is formed by identifying the presence of a couple relationship, lone parent-child relationship or other blood relationship. Some households will, therefore, contain more than one family.

13. A detailed and lengthy set of rules is required in order to specify a fully defined and rigorous operational methodology for identifying individual families. The rules are specified in this standard in the section on Coding procedures.

14. The operational definition clarifies the bounds on 'family' established in the nominal definition; most importantly, that a family is constrained within a household and only consists of related people 'usually resident' within that household (related people includes all child dependency relationships even though a child under the age of 15 may be unrelated to the family reference person). The definition of 'household' is therefore fundamental to the definition of 'family'. Following is a summary of the important points arising from this definition:

- a family must consist of at least two persons, one of whom is at least 15 years of age.
- as family is identified only from persons who are usually resident within a specific household, family members living in another household are excluded from being part of the same family.

- registered and de facto marriages are accorded equal status.
- non-related individuals living in the same household (eg. friend, boarder, housekeeper) are not counted as family members if they are 15 years of age or over.
- separate families are identified within a single household if more than one group of people satisfy the criteria for forming a family. (All related individuals not forming a separate family within a household, however, are assigned as members of one and only one family). This is an important qualification of the nominal definition.

15. Operationally, 'Family composition' is defined as:

- The differentiation of families based on the presence or absence of couple relationships, parent-child relationships, child dependency relationships or other familial relationships, in that order of precedence.

16. The specification of a rigorous methodology for operationalising 'Family composition' is outlined in the section on 'Rules for identifying families'. The following paragraph provides an encapsulation of the main features of the methodology.

17. The 'Family composition' of a particular family is operationalised by enumerating certain relationships that exist between a single 'family reference person' and each other member of that family. 'Family composition' is then allocated on the basis of whether the types of relationships given below are present or not in the family in the following order of precedence:

- couple relationship - defined as a registered or de facto marriage;
- parent-child relationship - defined as a relationship between two persons usually resident in the same household. The child is attached to the parent via a natural, adoptive, step, foster or child dependency relationship. For information on 'nominal children' see the section on Discussion of conceptual issues below.
- child dependency relationship - defined as including all children under the age of 15 (whether related or unrelated to the family reference person) and those natural, step, adopted or foster children who are full-time students 15-24 years of age.
- other relationship - defined as including all those persons related by blood or by marriage who are not covered by the above relationships.

18. As an example of the application of the above 'precedence rules' using the methodology described in the section on 'Rules for identifying families', consider the example of two elderly brothers living with the family of the daughter of one of the brothers. The daughter's family forms the basic family of the household and the two brothers are both allocated to this family unit as related individuals. The two brothers do not form a separate family in their own right in addition to the daughter's family, because they are related to a couple family or one-parent family already present in the household. However, if the two brothers were living in a dwelling with a family to whom they were not related, they would then form a family in their own right and be classified as an 'other family'.

Scope of the variable

19. The variable 'Family composition' applies to all families.

SUPPORTING VARIABLES

20. 'Family composition' requires the supporting variables 'Relationship in household' and 'Age'.

DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Nominal child and nominal parent

21. In many households in Australia the relationships between persons and the composition of those households are more diverse than those generally regarded as being traditional 'nuclear' families. Often the relationships between adults in the household and dependent children (persons aged under 15 or full-time students aged under 25) would not be captured by basic coding methods as explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard. In order to better reflect the nature of those relationships, where to all intents and purposes a 'parent-child' relationship exists, the ABS uses the concepts of the 'nominal child' and 'nominal parent'. The use of 'nominal child' and 'nominal parent' allows these relationships to be captured while maintaining a relatively simple set of family arrangements for analytical purposes.

22. For rules on when a 'nominal child' (and 'nominal parent') is created in family coding, see the section below on the 'Nominal child rules' in 'Coding procedures'.

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CLASSIFICATION AND CODING

THE CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

23. The four basic criteria used to structure the 'Family composition' classification are:

- Couple relationship
- Parent-child relationship
- Child dependency
- Other blood relationship

24. The first three of the above criteria are also used to determine 'Income unit composition'. For more information see the ABS Standard Variable 'Income unit composition'.

THE STANDARD CLASSIFICATION AND CODE STRUCTURE

25. 'Family composition' is a 4 level hierarchical classification.

26. In the classification structure a combination of the digits 1, 2, 3 and 9 is used at the four levels to code each of the categories available at that particular level. Following is a summary of what each digit represents at each level in the classification.

At level 1:

- 1 = couple family with no children
- 2 = couple family with children
- 3 = one parent family
- 9 = other family

At level 2:

- 1 = children under 15 present
- 2 = no children under 15 present

At level 3:

- 1 = dependent students present
- 2 = no dependent students present

At level 4:

- 1 = non-dependent children present
- 2 = no non-dependent children present

27. The code structure for 'Family composition' at all levels is presented below. The category titles are self-explanatory; brief descriptions may be found in the Glossary in the 'Overview of family, household and income unit standards'.

28. The categories in the classification are:

1 COUPLE FAMILY WITH NO CHILDREN

12 Couple family with no children under 15

122 Couple family with no children under 15 and no dependent students

1222 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children

2 COUPLE FAMILY WITH CHILDREN

21 Couple family with children under 15

- 211 Couple family with children under 15 and dependent students
 - 2111 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
 - 2112 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 212 Couple family with children under 15 and no dependent students
 - 2121 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children
 - 2122 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children

22 Couple family with no children under 15

- 221 Couple family with no children under 15 and with dependent students
 - 2211 Couple family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and non-dependent children
 - 2212 Couple family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 222 Couple family with no children under 15 and no dependent students
 - 2221 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children

3 ONE PARENT FAMILY

31 One parent family with children under 15

- 311 One parent family with children under 15 and dependent students
 - 3111 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children

3112 One parent family with children under 15,
dependent students and no non-dependent
children

312 One parent family with children under 15 and no
dependent students

3121 One parent family with children under 15, no
dependent students and with non-dependent
children

3122 One parent family with children under 15, no
dependent students and no non-dependent
children

32 One parent family with no children under 15

321 One parent family with no children under 15 and with
dependent students

3211 One parent family with no children under 15, with
dependent students and non-dependent children

3212 One parent family with no children under 15, with
dependent students and no non-dependent
children

322 One parent family with no children under 15 and no
dependent students

3221 One parent family with no children under 15, no
dependent students and with non-dependent
children

9 OTHER FAMILY

92 Other family

922 Other family

9222 Other family

Residual categories and codes

29. The category 9 Other family is reserved as a residual category. All other level 1 categories in the classification are exhaustive and therefore do not require residual categories and codes.

Supplementary codes

30. The supplementary codes are used to process inadequately described responses in statistical collections. There are two types of codes:

- two, three or four digit 'not further defined' codes ending in one, two or three zeros respectively; and
- 'Not applicable' and 'Not stated/Inadequately described' codes.

31. Codes ending in zero are described as 'not further defined' (n.f.d.) codes and are used to code responses which cannot be coded to the four digit or detailed level of the classification but can be coded to a higher level of the classification structure.

32. Codes commencing with zero are used to process responses which do not provide sufficient information to be coded to any level of the structure and when there is no 'Relationship in household' given. In the Census the codes '@@@@ Not applicable' or '8888 Not stated/Inadequately described' are used, for example when all the individuals present are under 15 years old.

SCOPE OF THE CLASSIFICATION

33. The 'Family composition' classification applies to all families. The classification also applies to households where a nominal parent has been designated for coding purposes.

APPLICATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION TO OTHER VARIABLES

34. The 'Family composition' classification is not applicable to any other variable. However, some of the classification criteria used to determine 'Family composition' are also used to determine 'Income unit composition'. For more information see the ABS Standard Variable 'Income unit composition'.

CODING PROCEDURES

35. Responses to the 'Family composition' variable are stored as codes of the classification. The 'Family composition' classification does not require a coding index.

Rules for identifying families

36. There are nine rules for identifying a family and allocating individuals to it. These rules determine how individuals should be allocated to families in households, particularly where the relationships between individuals are complex, such as multifamily households. The rules are listed in the order in which they are applied.

Criterion for forming a family

RULE 1. A family can only be formed from persons in the household, that is, persons usually resident in the same dwelling, one of whom must be 15 years of age or over.

Types of family which can be formed

RULE 2. A couple family exists if any two people, both of whom must be 15 years of age or over, have formed a couple relationship. This is defined as two people usually residing in the same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. It is identified by the characterisation of the relationship by a respondent using terms such as 'husband', 'wife', 'spouse', 'de facto', 'partner' etc.

RULE 3. A lone parent-to-child relationship forms the nucleus of a family when the parent is not a partner in a couple relationship, the child is not a partner in a couple relationship, and the child has no children of his or her own living in the same household. If in a one parent family there are two or more children present, the nucleus is formed between the parent and eldest child.

RULE 4. If two people in the household are related but not through a couple family or one parent family relationship then they form the nucleus of an 'other family'. Possible relationships are listed in Rule 9 below. If there are more than two related people in the household, the nucleus is formed by the two people with the closest relationship (see Rule 7e below). An 'other family' can only be formed by people who are not related to any couple family or one parent family already present in the household.

Allocation to families of persons not in the nucleus

RULE 5. Persons not directly forming the couple family nucleus or one parent family nucleus are allocated to the family nucleus to which they are most closely related. For example, children of a couple are allocated to that couple and children of a one parent family are allocated to the family nucleus of their parent and eldest sibling unless they form a couple or one parent family themselves.

Multifamily households

RULE 6. A separate family nucleus is formed for each couple. There can be only one couple per family. In cases where there are two couples in a household, these would become multifamily households, with two families present. A separate family nucleus is formed for each lone parent. There can be only one lone parent per family. A household with four persons in two separate one parent families becomes a multifamily household. A household with both a couple family and a one parent family becomes a multifamily household.

Special circumstances

RULE 7. The formation of the family nucleus and the subsequent attaching of people to this nucleus has a set of priority rules in both single and multifamily households. If there is any doubt about which way to form the family, use the following rules in the order listed. The first three rules are predominantly for application to parent-child relationships. Rules 7d and 7e are to be used initially when doubt arises from family relationships other than parent-child relationships; only after these Rules have been applied unsuccessfully should Rules 7a, 7b and 7c be applied in that order. Explanations of the Rules are provided below:

- a) most recent generation rule
- b) eldest child rule
- c) child to female parent rule
- d) closest relationship rule
- e) eldest relative rule

RULE 7a) Most recent generation rule

Where a lone parent-child relationship exists for two generations in the same household the most recent generation forms the family nucleus. Thus if a household contains a 70-year-old parent, who has no partner present, a 50-year-old daughter and her 20-year-old son, then the 50-year-old and the 20-year-old form the family nucleus and the 70-year-old is attached to the family as a father/mother (other related individual).

Another example of the most recent generation rule in a multifamily household is a household consisting of a couple aged 75 and 73 (family

1) who live with their son aged 50, his daughter aged 20 and the daughter's husband aged 22 (family 2). In this case, the son aged 50 could be attached to family 1 as a non-dependent child or family 2 as a father/mother (other related individual). The most recent generation rule attaches him to family 2 as a father/mother (other related individual).

RULE 7b) Eldest child rule

Other situations may arise where it is possible to allocate a person to more than one family in the household. These cases may be resolved by the application of the eldest child rule. For example, if a multifamily household was composed of a widower who lives with his son and daughter, where the son, aged 35, has formed a family nucleus with a partner (family 1) and the daughter, aged 25, has a child present and has thus formed a one parent family nucleus (family 2), then the widower is attached to the family nucleus of his eldest child, ie. family 1, as a father/mother (other related individual).

RULE 7c) Child to female parent rule

Where the parents of a child or children no longer consider themselves a couple but still live in the same household, then the child to female parent rule is used to form a lone parent family nucleus comprising the mother and eldest child, with other children of the mother attached to this nucleus. The father is attached to this family as a relative of the eldest child, unless he is part of a separate family nucleus.

RULE 7d) Closest relationship rule

In a multifamily household where a person is an other related individual and is related to more than one family (an aunt, for example, to one family but a grandmother to another) he or she should be allocated to the family where the closer relationship lies. That is, relationships by lineage (vertical) take precedence over other types of relationships. For example, grandmother over aunt, or aunt over cousin.

In a similar situation, where there is a multifamily household consisting of a couple aged 75 and 73 (family 1) who live with their nephew aged 50, his niece aged 20 and the niece's husband aged 22 (family 2), it is not possible to use Rule 7d to determine where the nephew's closer relationship lies. Therefore, Rule 7a, the most recent generation rule, is applied and the nephew aged 50 is attached to family 2 as an uncle (other related individual).

RULE 7e) Eldest relative rule

In a multifamily household where it is possible to allocate a person to more than one family using the same relationship (an aunt, for example, to the family of either of her two nephews), the person is allocated to the family of his or her eldest relative.

RULE 8. Individuals can be attached to the 'other family' nucleus if they are related to either one of the persons forming the nucleus or to any other person added to the 'other family' provided they do not form, or can not be allocated to, a couple or lone parent family in the household.

RULE 9. The following familial relationships are included in the definition of the term related:

Self	Sister
Husband	Step-sister
Wife	Half-sister
De facto marriage partner	Sister in-law
Mother	Brother
Step-mother	Step-brother
Mother in-law	Half brother
Father	Brother in-law
Step-father	Aunt
Father in-law	Step-aunt
Son	Aunt in-law

Step-son	Uncle
Son in-law	Step-uncle
Daughter	Uncle in-law
Step-daughter	Nephew
Daughter in-law	Step-nephew
Grandmother	Nephew in-law
Step-grandmother	Niece
Grandmother in-law	Step-niece
Grandfather	Niece in-law
Step-grandfather	Cousin
Grandfather in-law	Step-cousin
Grand daughter	Cousin in-law
Step-grand daughter	Great Uncle
Grand daughter in-law	Great Aunt
Grandson	Great-nephew
Step-grandson	Great-niece
Grandson in-law	

37. In addition to this list, any direct ancestors (such as great-grandmother) or direct descendants (such as great-grandchild) are considered to be family members, however, any person more distantly related than cousin is not considered a family member. Adopted and foster relationships are treated as related. Godparent and Godchild relationships are not treated as related.

Nominal child rules

38. The ABS defines dependent children as comprising two groups: children aged under 15, and dependent students. Dependent students must be full-time students aged between 15 and 24, and be a usual resident of the same dwelling as at least one of their parents.

39. Where a child under 15 is a usual resident of a dwelling where their parent is not a usual resident, that child must be allocated a 'nominal parent', and in the process becomes a 'nominal child'.

40. Any person who is allocated as a 'nominal parent' to a 'nominal child' is henceforth regarded as a parent, coded as such and is indistinguishable from a birth, foster, step or adoptive parent.

41. Full-time students aged between 15 and 24 are never allocated nominal parents. Consequently if that student is a usual resident of a dwelling where their birth, step or adoptive parent is not a usual resident, the student is unable to be defined as 'dependent'. The student becomes a related (or unrelated) person in that household.

42. Allocation of a nominal parent to a nominal child is determined by the application of the following rules, applied in the following order:

- sibling aged 25 or more. The nominal child's eldest sibling who is over the age of 25 is assigned as the nominal parent.
- closest other relative. The nominal child's closest non-sibling relative aged 25 or more is assigned as the nominal parent. If necessary relationships by lineage (vertical) take precedence over other types of relationships. For example, grandmother over aunt, or aunt over cousin.
- couple relationship. Persons in a couple relationship are assigned as the nominal parents of the nominal child.

- child to female parent. The nominal child is assigned a female nominal parent in preference to a male nominal parent. For example, aunt over uncle.
- eldest person rule. The nominal child is assigned the eldest person usually resident in the dwelling as their nominal parent.

43. For example, a child usually resident with their uncle and aunt (who form a couple) and grandmother would be assigned to the grandmother (closest relative rule). A child usually resident with their aunt, and an unrelated couple, would be assigned to the aunt (closest relative). However, a child usually resident with an unrelated couple and the sibling of the unrelated couple, would be assigned to the couple (couple relationship rule).

44. A child usually resident in a dwelling comprising unrelated persons only would be assigned to the eldest female, or failing that to the eldest person.

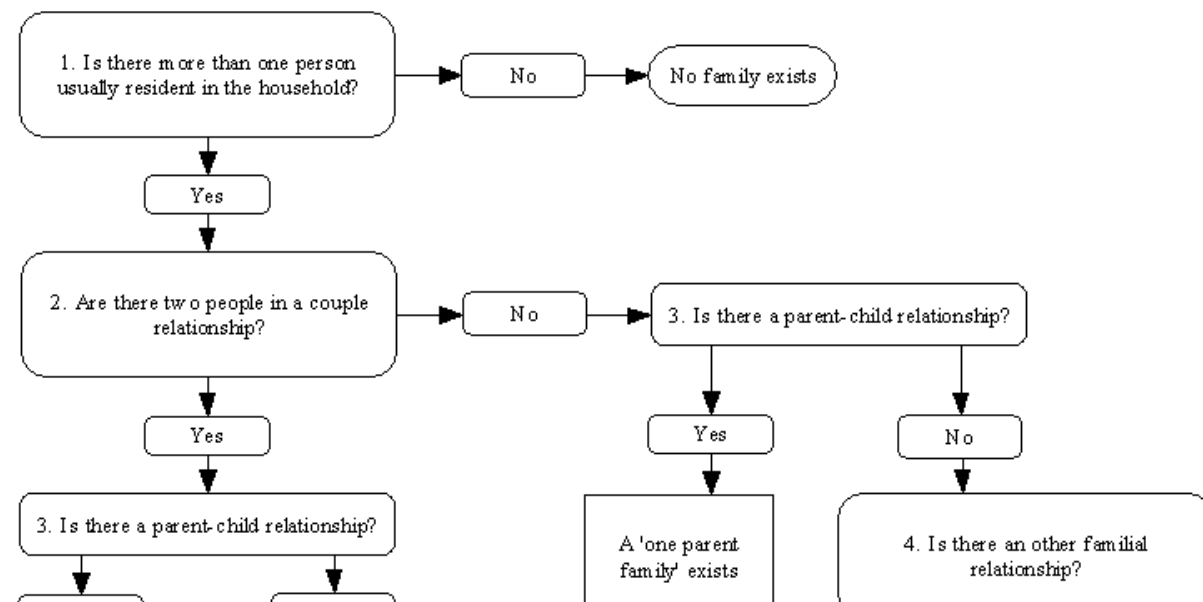
45. A child usually resident with two or more relatives, for example an uncle and aunt who are siblings, would be assigned to the aunt (child to female parent rule). If the child resided with two uncles, they would be assigned to the eldest uncle (eldest person rule).

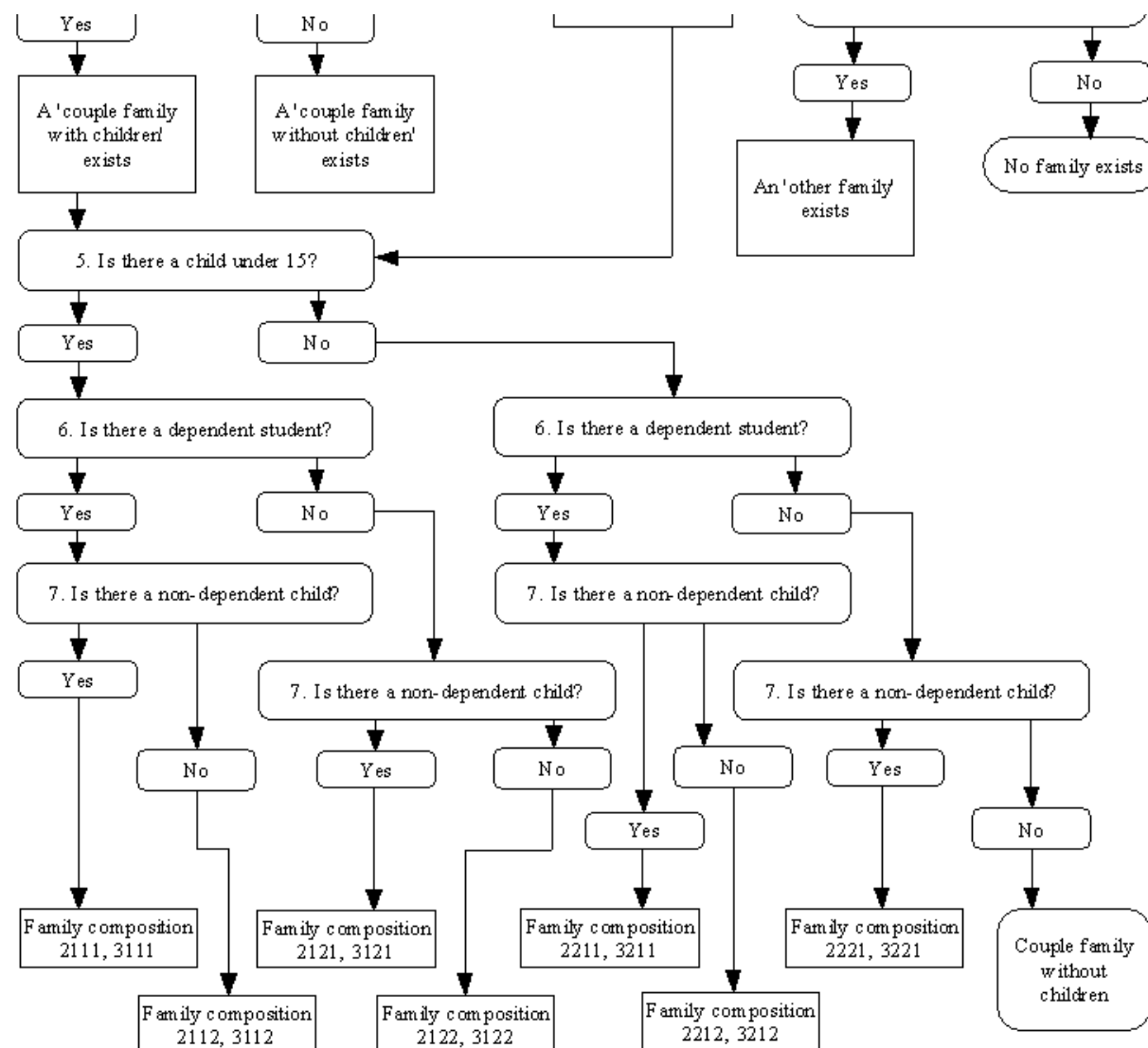
Description of coding

46. Families are coded to the 'Family composition' classification by the application of a simple series of consecutive criteria. These are

- presence of couple relationship
- presence of children under 15
- presence of dependent students
- presence of non-dependent children

47. The presence or absence of each of these factors leads to the ultimate allocation of the appropriate 'Family composition' code. The decision-making process is represented in the following flowchart:





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STANDARD QUESTION MODULES

48. The data used to form the input to the 'Household composition' classification are derived from those collected to derive the 'Relationship in household'. The recommended methodology and questionnaire modules are explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard.

STANDARD INPUT CATEGORIES

49. The standard input categories for 'Family composition' are the level 4 categories of the 'Family composition' classification. For operational reasons, supplementary codes also exist where, for example, all of the individuals present are under 15 years old meaning that under the operational definition a family can not be formed. In such cases the code '02 Not classifiable' is used.

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This document was added or updated on 23/04/2007.

OUTPUT

STANDARD OUTPUT CATEGORIES

50. The following are the recommended standard output categories for data on 'Family composition':

Couple family with no children

Couple family with
 children under 15
 and dependent students
 and non-dependent children
 and no non-dependent children
 and no dependent students
 and non-dependent children
 and no non-dependent children

no children under 15

- and dependent students
 - and non-dependent children
 - and no non-dependent children
- and no dependent students
 - and non-dependent children

One parent family with children under 15

- and dependent students
 - and non-dependent children
 - and no non-dependent children
- and no dependent students
 - and non-dependent children
 - and no non-dependent children

no children under 15

- and dependent students
 - and non-dependent children
 - and no non-dependent children
- and no dependent students
 - and non-dependent children

Other family

51. The hierarchical structure of the classification allows the flexibility to output statistics at the level of the classification that best suits the purpose for which the statistics are required.

52. As output requirements will vary, alternative output labels and structures have been presented in this standard. There are two different approaches which can be taken: outputting at one level at a time, or outputting more than one level in an aggregated or hierarchical structure. Standard labels for these two approaches have been provided below to ensure comparability of published results.

Output labels for level 1

Couple family with no children
Couple family with children
One parent family
Other family

NOTE: this structure requires a footnote stating: The categories 'Couple family with children' and 'One parent family' may include children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children.

Output labels for level 2

Couple family with no children

Couple family with children under 15
Couple family with no children under 15

One parent family with children under 15
One parent family with no children under 15

Other family

NOTE: this structure requires a footnote stating: The categories 'Couple family with children under 15', 'Couple family with no children under 15', 'One parent family with children under 15' and 'One parent family with no children under 15' may include dependent students and non-dependent children.

Output labels for level 3

Couple family with no children

Couple family with children under 15 and dependent students
Couple family with children under 15 and no dependent students
Couple family with no children under 15 and with dependent students
Couple family with non-dependent children only

One parent family with children under 15 and dependent students
One parent family with children under 15 and no dependent students
One parent family with no children under 15 and with dependent students
One parent family with non-dependent children only

Other family

NOTE: this structure requires a footnote stating: The categories 'Couple family with children under 15 and dependent students', 'Couple family with children under 15 and no dependent students', 'Couple family with no children under 15 and with dependent students', 'One parent family with children under 15 and dependent students', 'One parent family with children under 15 and no dependent students' and 'One parent family with no children under 15 and with dependent students' may include non-dependent children.

Output labels for level 4

Couple family with no children

Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children
Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children

Couple family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and non-dependent children
Couple family with no children under 15, and with dependent students and no non-dependent children

Couple family with no children under 15, and no dependent students and with non-dependent children

One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children

One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children

One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children

One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children

One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and non-dependent children

One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children

One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children

Other family

Mandatory footnotes and other output information

53. Although all output stated above is standard, there are additional mandatory requirements for footnotes and glossary entries.

- There must be glossary definitions for every standard output label used.
- The categories 'With children under 15', 'With no children under 15 and with dependent students' and 'With non-dependent children only' are mutually exclusive; the category 'With children under 15' may or may not include the presence of dependent students and non-dependent children; similarly the category 'With no children under 15 and with dependent students' may or may not include non-dependent children.
- Within all levels of the broad categories 'Couple family with no children', 'Couple family with children', and 'One parent family', other related individuals may be present in the family.

Output categories and code structure for same-sex couples

54. Where information is required on the type of couple in a family, a code number called the 'type of couple identifier' can be applied which identifies the types of couples as follows:

5 Opposite-sex couple

7 Same-sex male couple

8 Same-sex female couple

55. It is envisaged that the type of couple identifier (whether a same-sex or opposite-sex couple) will generally be used only in conjunction with the super group level (level 1). However, if data quality permits, it may be applied at any level of the classification. The dissemination of data about opposite-sex and same-sex couples at more detailed levels will depend upon the willingness of people to identify themselves in these categories and upon the sample size of the collection.

56. The numbers 5, 7, 8 can be added to the first, second, third or fourth digits of the 'Family composition' code to produce aggregate output which distinguishes between same-sex and opposite-sex couples at the required level of the classification. For example, aggregate data making this distinction at the broadest level

can be produced using the following codes:

- 1 Couple family with no children
 - 15 Opposite-sex couple with no children
 - 17 Same-sex male couple with no children
 - 18 Same-sex female couple with no children
- 2 Couple family with children
 - 25 Opposite-sex couple with children
 - 27 Same-sex male couple with children
 - 28 Same-sex female couple with children
- 3 One parent family
- 9 Other family

57. The following statement is a mandatory footnote for the same-sex couple output classification:

- Within all levels of the broad categories 'Couple family with no children', 'Couple family with children', and 'One parent family', other related individuals may be present in the family.

CROSS-CLASSIFIED OUTPUT STRUCTURE

58. In many circumstances the most useful application of 'Family composition' will be in combined output with 'Household composition'. Though a cross-classified output based purely on the outputs available for 'Family composition' and 'Household composition' is feasible, many users are more interested in an output structure which reflects a focus on aspects of the data collected, such as the presence or absence of dependent children within the family and whether people other than just parents and their dependent children are also present in the household or not. Such other people are non-dependent children, other related individuals in the family, or non-family members in the household.

59. Published output using either of the two structures below should be labelled 'Family composition of household'. The same title is applied to either structure because the short structure is an aggregation of some categories of the detailed structure and thus fully compatible.

Detailed output structure

60. The first recommended standard cross-classified output structure is below. The table has mandatory explanatory requirements in the form of footnotes or glossary entries which are detailed in the 'Summary information' section below.

One family households

 Couple family with dependent children

 Couple family with dependent children only

 Couple family with dependent children and other persons

- One parent family with dependent children
 - One parent family with dependent children only
 - One parent family with dependent children and other persons
 - Couple only
 - Other one family households
- Multiple family households
 - Multiple family households with dependent children
 - Multiple family households with no dependent children
- Non-family households
 - Lone person
 - Group household

61. If required, the output can feature two extra subtotals as follows:

- Total households with dependent children
- Total households with no dependent children

62. The categories of the detailed output structure provided above may be aggregated in a variety of ways in order to best fulfil user requirements. For example separate information on Lone persons and Group households may not be required, in which case output could be published at the Non-family household level. However, in the interests of comparability across collections a shorter aggregated version of the structure is explained below and is recommended for use where possible.

63. The detailed information required to construct this output tabulation is too lengthy for inclusion as footnotes to the table. This information is specified below under the heading 'Detailed description of table categories'. The summary information outlines the information contained in the detailed description to aid interpretation of the table; it should be included as footnotes, in a glossary or as explanatory material to any published output.

Summary information

64. The information required is:

- a. The expression 'other persons' refers to non-dependent children, other related individuals, and non-family members in the household.
- b. The categories 'Couple family with dependent children only', 'One parent family with dependent children only' and 'Couple only' do not contain any non-dependent children, any related individuals, or any non-family members in the household.
- c. The category 'Other one family households' comprises the 'Family composition' category Other family, and the 'Family composition' category One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children.

Detailed description of table categories

65. The following information defines the exact content of each category in the detailed output structure above:

a. Dependent children are children aged under 15 years, and dependent students. Dependent students are full-time students aged 15-24 years.

b. The expression 'other persons' refers to non-dependent children, other related individuals, and non-family members in the household.

c. 'Other related individuals' are persons who report a 'Relationship in household' to the Family reference person of the following relationships:

- 61 Brother/sister
- 62 Father/mother
- 63 Non-dependent grandchild
- 64 Grandfather/grandmother
- 65 Cousin
- 66 Uncle/Aunt
- 67 Nephew/niece
- 69 Other related individual not elsewhere classified

They are identified by cross-classification of the family with 'Relationship in household' data.

d. The categories 'Couple family with dependent children only', 'One parent family with dependent children only' and 'Couple only' do not contain any non-dependent children, any related individuals, or any non-family members in the household.

e. The category 'Couple family with dependent children only' comprises the following 'Family composition' categories, where the 'Household composition' category is 11 One family household with only family members present, and there are no 'other related individuals' present:

- 2112 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2122 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2212 Couple family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children

f. The category 'Couple family with dependent children and other persons' includes the following 'Family composition' categories:

- 2111 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
- 2121 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children
- 2211 Couple family with no children under 15, with dependent students and non-dependent children

It also includes the following 'Family composition' categories where the 'Household composition' category is 12 One family household with non-family members present, or when 'other related individuals' are present:

- 2112 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children

- 2122 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2212 Couple family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children

g. The category 'One parent family with dependent children only' comprises the following 'Family composition' categories, where the 'Household composition' category is 11 One family household with only family members present, and there are no 'other related individuals' present:

- 3112 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3122 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3212 One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children

h. The category 'One parent family with dependent children and other persons' includes the following 'Family composition' categories:

- 3111 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
- 3121 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children
- 3211 One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and non-dependent children

It also includes the following 'Family composition' categories where the 'Household composition' category is 12 One family household with non-family members present, or when 'other related individuals' are present:

- 3112 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3122 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3212 One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children

i. The category 'Couple only' comprises the 'Family composition' category 1222 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children, where the 'Household composition' category is 11 One family household with only family members present, and there are no 'other related individuals' present.

j. The category 'Other one family households' comprises the 'Family composition' category 1222 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children, where the 'Household composition' category is 12 One family household with non-family members present; the 'Family composition' category 2221 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children; the 'Family composition' category 3221 One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children; and the 'Family composition' category 9222 Other family.

Short structure

66. The second recommended standard cross-classified output structure is below. It represents an aggregated version of the Detailed structure above and is fully compatible with it. The table has mandatory explanatory requirements in the form of footnotes or glossary entries which are detailed beneath the output structure.

One family households

- Couple family with dependent children
- One parent family with dependent children
- Couple only
- Other one family households
- Multiple family households
- Non-family households
 - Lone person
 - Group household

67. The footnotes or information required are:

- a. The categories 'Couple family with dependent children' and 'One parent family with dependent children' may contain non-dependent children, other related persons and non-related persons.
- b. The category 'Other one family households' comprises the 'Family composition' category Other family, the 'Family composition' category One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children, and Couple families with no dependent children but with other persons.

MEASUREMENT ISSUES AND RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

MEASUREMENT ISSUES

68. Care needs to be exercised when drawing conclusions about what is included in the various output categories. The 'Family composition' classification is a relatively small classification which attempts to categorise a wide range of families into single categories. For example the level 1 group can be misleading in relation to the category of one-parent families. This category includes the traditional notion of a lone parent with young children as well as a mature person living with an aged parent.

RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

69. The 'Family composition' classification is closely connected with several other classifications. These include:

- 'Relationship in household'
- 'Household composition'
- 'Registered marital status'
- 'Social marital status'
- 'Income unit composition'

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Note that there is no correspondence listed between 'Family composition' and the 4-digit level of 'Family type', as 'Family composition' does not differentiate families according to the criterion for the 4-digit level of 'Family type', which is the presence or absence of 'other related individuals'.

Table 1: 'Family type' to 'Family composition'

Family type code	Family composition code
1	2
11	212
111	2121
112	2122
12	221
121	2211
122	2212
13	211
131	2111
132	2112
14	222,2221
141	222,2221

2	1,12,122,1222
24	1,12,122,1222
242	1,12,122,1222
3	3
31	312
311	3121
312	3122
32	321
321	3211
322	3212
33	311
331	3111
332	3112
34	3221
341	3221
9	9,92,922,9222
94	9,92,922,9222
942	9,92,922,9222

Note 1: in cases where multiple codes are listed under 'Family composition', it is not necessary to specify at which level of the classification the correspondence is made, as all levels of those listed categories are identical in content.

Table 2. 'Family composition' to 'Family type'.

Family composition code	Family type code
1	2,24,242
12	2,24,242
122	2,24,242
1222	2,24,242
2	1
21	11,13*
211	13
2111	131
2112	132
212	11
2121	111
2122	112
22	12,14*
221	12

2211	121
2212	122
222	14,141
2221	14,141
3	3
31	31,33*
311	33
3111	331
3112	332
312	312
3121	311
3122	312
32	32,34*
321	32
3211	321
3212	322
322	34,341
3221	34,341
9	9,94,942
92	9,94,942
922	9,94,942
9222	9,94,942

Note 1: in cases marked with an asterisk, it is possible to code data categorised to the 'Family composition' classification to either of the listed 'Family type' categories as the information is insufficient to select between the 'Family type' categories.

Note 2: in other cases where multiple codes are listed under 'Family type', it is not necessary to specify at which level of the classification the correspondence is made, as all levels of those listed categories are identical in content.

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1. The concept of **household** is fundamental in the production of social and labour statistics. The household is one of the basic units of social statistical aggregation and is used as the basis for data collection in many statistical collections. In the ABS, many social, labour and demographic surveys are household-based, including the Census of Population and Housing and the Labour Force Survey. The ABS 'Household composition' variable classifies households by the number of families or other people usually resident within them.

2. A household can be thought of, in its broadest sense, as a group of people who live together as a single unit within a dwelling. Together with the family, it is considered as one of the basic groups of social aggregation. Each of these social phenomena is closely connected to the other, and although each concept is defined in different terms, in practice, both often refer to the same set of people when applied to a particular dwelling. Information on households provides input to Australian household estimates, as well as identifying various groups within the population, such as multiple family households or the number of people living alone. 'Household composition' can also be cross classified with other variables, for example, 'Total cash income'.

3. Broadly speaking, 'Household composition' is classified according to the number and composition of families within households. Therefore, in order to determine 'Household composition' the relationship of household members to each other and the existence or absence of familial relationships must be considered. This is established through the use of the 'Relationship in household' and then the 'Family composition' variables.

4. Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary section of the 'Overview of family, household and income unit standards'.

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NAME OF THE VARIABLE

5. The name of the variable is 'Household composition'.

6. The primary factor determining 'Household composition' is whether a family is present or not and whether or not other unrelated household members are present. 'Household composition' replaces the ABS Standard Variable 'Household type'. The title 'Household type' was used to describe this variable in the Census since 1986, the Survey of Families in Australia 1992 (1992 Family Survey) and the Monthly Population Survey (MPS). The title 'Family Composition of Household' has been used in the Household Expenditure Survey (HES). Prior to the introduction of the 'Household type' standard in 1992, the MPS used a non-standard list of family and household types labelled as 'Household Type'.

DEFINITION OF THE VARIABLE

Nominal Definition

7. The concept of 'Household' is nominally defined as:

- One or more persons usually resident in the same private dwelling.

8. The System of National Accounts (SNA) definition is: 'a small group of persons who share the same living accommodation, who pool some, or all, of their income and wealth and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food.' The ABS definition varies from that of the SNA only in specifically allowing lone person households, and in removing any reference to collective consumption.

9. The variable 'Household composition' is defined as:

- The differentiation of households on the basis of the number of families present, and whether or not unrelated household members are present (if it is a family household), or the number of household members (if it is a non-family household).

10. The variable 'Household composition' is an attribute of the statistical unit 'household'. Indirectly it is also an attribute of the 'person' for all persons who are members of households.

Operational Definition

11. The 'Household' is operationally defined as:

- One or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, usually resident in the same private dwelling.

12. The ABS does not seek to differentiate multi-household dwellings from single-household dwellings; the number of households in a private dwelling is always regarded as one.

13. Having established the relationship of all usual residents of the household to one another, and identified all families and other unrelated household members (if any) within the household, the operationalisation of 'Household composition' is summarised as follows:

- Households are allocated to categories of the 'Household composition' classification on the basis of the number of families identified in the household and whether unrelated household members are present in a family household and whether the number of household members is greater than one in a non-family household.

14. The identification of usual residents is essential to determine 'Household composition' because the 'Relationship in household' data on which family and household coding rely only applies to usual residents.

15. For those cases where visitors are within scope of the collection, provision is made to include households consisting of visitors only in Supplementary category '02 Visitor only household'.

16. Household member relationships and family identification are carried out using the 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' classifications. For further details see the standards for those variables.

Scope of the variable

17. The variable 'Household composition' applies to all households.

Supporting variables

18. 'Household composition' requires the supporting variables 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition'. 'Social marital status', derived from 'Relationship in household', is used to help determine 'Family composition'.

DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

19. The variable 'Household composition' aims to analyse the counting unit 'household', just as the variable 'Family composition' is used in analysing the counting unit 'family' in social and labour statistical collections and the variable 'Income unit composition' is used to group persons within households who pool income. The income unit, the family and the household describe social phenomena which are very closely related in practice. Even though they are fundamentally different concepts (income pooling versus familial relations versus sharing a dwelling), when applied to a particular dwelling they will all often refer to the same set of people. This is because the family is defined as a subset of the household and many Australian households comprise only a single family and a single income unit.

20. The 'Household composition' classification does not distinguish between multifamily households where the families are related to each other (eg where siblings each with dependent children share a dwelling), and multifamily households where the families are not related to each other. If information making this distinction is required, it should be derived as the separate variable 'Relationship between families' using 'Relationship in household' data. For a summary of the ABS Standard Variable 'Relationship between families', see Appendix A. The 'Household composition' classification does not distinguish between income units.

21. The 'Household composition' concept is confined to private dwellings. In some surveys, a multi-stage area sample of dwellings separately identifies two categories of dwellings: private dwellings (houses, flats, etc.) and non-private dwellings (or 'Special dwellings') which include units such as hotels and motels. Persons living in non-private dwellings such as hospitals, prisons, homes for the aged, etc. are outside the scope of the classification. Hotels, motels and serviced apartments may be thought to contain potential households, but the ABS excludes people in non-private dwellings from family coding due to operational constraints imposed by the nature of collection methodologies. Similarly in the case of the Census, household data are not collected from persons residing in non-private dwellings, either temporarily or for longer periods of time. Instead, each individual is administered a personal questionnaire. Consequently the Census does not identify households in non-private dwellings either. It should be noted that over time the types of dwellings categorised as private dwellings have expanded to include some retirement villages, caravans etc, effectively broadening the scope of dwellings considered private dwellings.

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THE CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

22. The criteria used to structure the 'Household composition' classification are:

- The presence or absence of families in a household,
- The number of families in a family household,
- The presence of non-family members,
- Whether there is more than one household member in a non-family household.

THE STANDARD CLASSIFICATION AND CODE STRUCTURE

23. The standard 'Household composition' classification comprises the following categories:

1 One family household

11 One family household with only family members present

12 One family household with non-family members present

2 Multiple family household

21 Two family household

- 211 Two family household with only family members present
 - 212 Two family household with non-family members present
 - 22 Three or more family household
 - 221 Three or more family household with only family members present
 - 222 Three or more family household with non-family members present
- 3 Non-family household
 - 31 Lone person household
 - 32 Group household

Residual categories and codes

24. Not applicable.

Supplementary codes

25. The category '01 Not stated/Inadequately described' is used to code responses which do not provide sufficient information to be coded to any level of the structure or when no information is given. The category '02 Visitor only household' is used when all of the individuals present are visitors and such households fall within the scope of a particular collection. The category '03 Other not classifiable' is used to process responses which are not within the scope of the classification, for example when all of the individuals present are under 15 years old.

SCOPE OF THE CLASSIFICATION

26. The 'Household composition' classification is designed to classify all households within all private dwellings in Australia. Household data are not sought from persons usually resident in non-private dwellings, which are out of scope of the classification (see the section on 'Discussion of conceptual issues' for further information).

27. Operationally, any dwelling where all members are aged under 15 years is out of scope of the classification and therefore coded to '03 Other not classifiable'. This approach is consistent with that used in the 'Family composition' classification.

28. Although 'Household composition' is an attribute of the counting unit Household, where output requires, families and persons may be classified by the 'Household composition' of their household.

APPLICATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION TO OTHER VARIABLES

29. The 'Household composition' classification should only be applied to the variable 'Household composition'.

CODING PROCEDURES

30. The standard classification and codes for 'Household composition' are derived from 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' data. Responses to the 'Household composition' variable are stored as codes of the classification.

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STANDARD QUESTION MODULE

31. The data used to form the input to the 'Household composition' classification are derived from those collected to derive the 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' variables. The recommended methodology and questionnaire modules are explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard.

STANDARD INPUT CATEGORIES

32. The derivation of the input categories can be summarised as follows:

33. The relationship of all household members to one another is established. Then all families and other unrelated household members (if any) within the household are identified. 'Household composition' is then allocated on the basis of the number of families and whether unrelated household members are present (if it is a family household) or the number of household members if it is a non-family household.

34. Thus, the original answers to the questionnaire module must be processed so as to produce the following input to the 'Household composition' classification:

- the presence or absence of families in a household,

- the number of families present in a family household, and
- whether unrelated persons are present in a family household, or
- whether there is more than one person present in a non-family household.

35. This information can be taken directly from that already processed to obtain 'Relationship In household' and 'Family composition'.

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STANDARD OUTPUT CATEGORIES

36. In order that the full range of household structures are represented in statistical output, it is anticipated that most users and producers of household statistics will present data using the full classification structure. If output is to be presented in a nested or hierarchical manner, then the standard output categories are:

One family household

- One family household with only family members present
- One family household with non-family members present

Multiple family household

Two family household

- Two family household with only family members present
- Two family household with non-family members present

Three or more family household

- Three or more family household with only family members present

Three or more family household with non-family members present

Non-family household

Lone person household

Group household

Not classifiable

Visitor only dwelling

Other not classifiable

Not stated/Inadequately described

37. If output is to be presented at one level only the standard output labels at level 1 for this option are:

Family households

Non-family households

Not classifiable

Not stated/Inadequately described

or

Family households

Lone person households

Group households

Not classifiable

Not stated/Inadequately described

or

One family households

Multiple family households

Non-family households

Not classifiable

Not stated/Inadequately described

or

One family households

Multiple family households

Lone person households

Group households

Not classifiable

Not stated/Inadequately described

or

One family households
Two family households
Three or more family households
Non-family households
Not classifiable
Not stated/Inadequately described

or

One family households
Two family households
Three or more family households
Lone person households
Group households
Not classifiable
Not stated/Inadequately described

CROSS-CLASSIFIED OUTPUT STRUCTURE

38. In many circumstances the most useful application of 'Family composition' will be in combined output with 'Household composition'. Though a cross-classified output based purely on the outputs available for 'Family composition' and 'Household composition' is feasible, many users are more interested in an output structure which reflects a focus on aspects of the data collected, such as the presence or absence of dependent children within the family and whether people other than just parents and their dependent children are also present in the household or not. Such other people are non-dependent children, other related individuals in the family, or non-family members in the household.

39. Published output using either of the two structures below should be labelled 'Family composition of household'. The same title is applied to either structure because the short structure is an aggregation of some categories of the detailed structure and thus fully compatible.

Detailed output structure

40. The first recommended standard cross-classified output structure is below. The table has mandatory explanatory requirements in the form of footnotes or glossary entries which are detailed beneath the output structure.

One family households
 Couple family with dependent children
 Couple family with dependent children only
 Couple family with dependent children and other persons
 One parent family with dependent children

- One parent family with dependent children only
- One parent family with dependent children and other persons
- Couple only
- Other one family households
- Multiple family households
 - Multiple family households with dependent children
 - Multiple family households with no dependent children
- Non-family households
 - Lone person
 - Group household

41. If required, the output can feature two extra subtotals as follows:

- Total households with dependent children
- Total households with no dependent children

42. The categories of the detailed output structure provided above may be aggregated in a variety of ways in order to best fulfil user requirements. For example separate information on Lone persons and Group households may not be required, in which case output could be published at the Non-family household level. However, in the interests of comparability across collections a shorter aggregated version of the structure is explained below and is recommended for use where possible.

43. The detailed information required to construct this output tabulation is too lengthy for inclusion as footnotes to the table. This information is specified below under the heading 'Detailed description of table categories'. The summary information outlines the information contained in the detailed description to aid interpretation of the table; it should be included as footnotes, in a glossary or as explanatory material to any published output.

Summary information

44. The information required is:

- a. The expression 'other persons' refers to non-dependent children, other related individuals, and non-family members in the household.
- b. The categories 'Couple family with dependent children only', 'One parent family with dependent children only' and 'Couple only' do not contain any non-dependent children, any related individuals, or any non-family members in the household.
- c. The category 'Other one family households' comprises the 'Family composition' category Other family, and the 'Family composition' category One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children.

Detailed description of table categories

45. The following information defines the exact content of each category in the detailed output structure above:

a. Dependent children are children aged under 15 years, and dependent students. Dependent students are full-time students aged 15-24 years.

b. The expression 'other persons' refers to non-dependent children, other related individuals, and non-family members in the household.

c. 'Other related individuals' are persons who report a 'Relationship in household' to the Family reference person of the following relationships:

- 61 Brother/sister
- 62 Father/mother
- 63 Non-dependent grandchild
- 64 Grandfather/grandmother
- 65 Cousin
- 66 Uncle/Aunt
- 67 Nephew/niece
- 69 Other related individual not elsewhere classified

They are identified by cross-classification of the family with 'Relationship in household' data.

d. The categories 'Couple family with dependent children only', 'One parent family with dependent children only' and 'Couple only' do not contain any non-dependent children, any related individuals, or any non-family members in the household.

e. The category 'Couple family with dependent children only' comprises the following 'Family composition' categories, where the 'Household composition' category is 11 One family household with only family members present, and there are no 'other related individuals' present:

- 2112 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2122 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2212 Couple family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children

f. The category 'Couple family with dependent children and other persons' includes the following 'Family composition' categories:

- 2111 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
- 2121 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children
- 2211 Couple family with no children under 15, with dependent students and non-dependent children

It also includes the following 'Family composition' categories where the 'Household composition' category is 12 One family household with non-family members present, or when 'other related individuals' are present:

- 2112 Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 2122 Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children

- 2212 Couple family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children

g. The category 'One parent family with dependent children only' comprises the following 'Family composition' categories, where the 'Household composition' category is 11 One family household with only family members present, and there are no 'other related individuals' present:

- 3112 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3122 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3212 One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children

h. The category 'One parent family with dependent children and other persons' includes the following 'Family composition' categories:

- 3111 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children
- 3121 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children
- 3211 One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and non-dependent children

It also includes the following 'Family composition' categories where the 'Household composition' category is 12 One family household with non-family members present, or when 'other related individuals' are present:

- 3112 One parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3122 One parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children
- 3212 One parent family with no children under 15, with dependent students and no non-dependent children

i. The category 'Couple only' comprises the 'Family composition' category 1222 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children, where the 'Household composition' category is 11 One family household with only family members present, and there are no 'other related individuals' present.

j. The category 'Other one family households' comprises the 'Family composition' category 1222 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children, where the 'Household composition' category is 12 One family household with non-family members present; the 'Family composition' category 2221 Couple family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children; the 'Family composition' category 3221 One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children; and the 'Family composition' category 9222 Other family.

Short structure

46. The second recommended standard cross-classified output structure is below. It represents an aggregated version of the Detailed structure above and is fully compatible with it. The table has mandatory explanatory requirements in the form of footnotes or glossary entries which are detailed beneath the output structure.

One family households

Couple family with dependent children

- One parent family with dependent children
- Couple only
- Other one family households
- Multiple family households
- Non-family households
 - Lone person
 - Group household

47. The footnotes or information required are:

a. The categories 'Couple family with dependent children' and 'One parent family with dependent children' may contain non-dependent children.

b. The category 'Other one family households' comprises the 'Family composition' category Other family, the 'Family composition' category One parent family with no children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children, and Couple families with no dependent children but with other persons.

Supporting variables

48. The variable 'Household composition' is primarily used as a stand-alone variable but can be used in conjunction with many other variables to increase the explanatory power of the classification. 'Relationship in household' and 'Family composition' are required in order to determine 'Household composition'.

MEASUREMENT ISSUES AND RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

MEASUREMENT ISSUES

49. Over time the types of dwellings considered as private dwellings have expanded to include caravan parks and some retirement villages. Therefore while the actual scope of the 'Household composition' variable remains the same, the population of persons considered to be within that scope has expanded to enable such households to be enumerated. No other specific measurement issues apply to the variable 'Household composition' beyond the normal constraints affecting statistical collections, such as problems with confidentiality or standard errors which may not permit the output of data for some of the categories at the more detailed levels of the classification.

RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

50. The 'Household composition' classification is closely linked to the following classifications:

- 'Family composition'
- 'Relationship In household'
- 'Income unit composition'
- 'Social marital status'

51. Changes to any of these classifications cannot be considered in isolation and all possible ramifications concerning the other classifications must be investigated before adopting the change.

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This document was added or updated on 23/04/2007.

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF THE ABS STANDARD VARIABLE 'RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILIES'

Introduction

1. 'Relationship between families' explains the links, familial or otherwise, between separate families usually resident in a single household. It does this by using 'Relationship in household' data to identify the relationships of the family reference persons to the household reference person. It can be used in cases where it is necessary to distinguish between multifamily households where the families are related to each other (eg where siblings each with dependent children share a dwelling), and multifamily households where the families are not related to each other.

2. For more information on the steps required to ascertain 'Relationship between families', see "Relationship in household", 'Family composition', and the standard 'Relationship between families' document.

Name and definitions

3. The name of the variable is 'Relationship of non-primary family to primary family'. The standard abbreviated name is 'Relationship between families'.

Nominal definition

4. The 'Relationship between families' is the familial and non-familial relationships between two families in a multifamily household.

Operational definition

5. The 'Relationship between families' is measured by determining the relationship between the family reference person in one family to the family reference person in the primary family.

6. The relationship is established by:

- (a) Identifying the families which exist in a household.
- (b) Identifying the family reference person in each family.
- (c) Identifying the family relationships of the second, third or subsequent family reference persons to the primary family reference person.
- (d) The relationship established by (c) then becomes the relationship of family 2,3 or subsequent family to the primary family.

7. 'Relationship between families' is an attribute of the counting unit 'family'.

The classification criteria

8. The criteria used to classify 'Relationship between families' are:

- whether the family is present in a multifamily household, and
- the type of relationship that one family reference person has to the family reference person of the primary family. The types of relationships that can be separately identified are immediate family, either vertically extended: parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren or horizontally extended: brothers, sisters. Relationships between more distant family members (e.g. aunt, uncle, cousin) will be grouped together into the Other related family category. If the family reference persons are not related to each other the relationship will be recorded as 'unrelated'.

The standard classification and code structure

9. The standard classification and code structure for 'Relationship between families' is:

- 1 Mother's/father's family
- 2 Grandparent's family

- 3 Son/daughter's family
- 4 Grandchild's family
- 5 Brother's/sister's family
- 6 Other related family
- 7 Unrelated

Scope of the classification

10. This classification is only applicable to non-primary families in multifamily households.

Standard output categories

11. The standard output categories are the same as the standard input categories:

Mother's/father's family
Grandparent's family
Son/daughter's family
Grandchild's family
Brother's/sister's family
Other related family
Unrelated

Lone ancestor

12. An other related, usually resident, individual who is a Father/Mother or Grandfather/Grandmother. They are, thus, a usually resident parent or grandparent of a person in the household who has already formed a family relationship. To be identified as an other related individual, a person cannot have a spouse or partner usually resident in the household and cannot form a parent-child relationship with any other related individual in the household.

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1. The standard variable 'Social marital status' identifies the living arrangements of couples in the Australian population. The related variable 'Registered Marital Status' is used to establish the legal status of marriage arrangements in Australia. As the two concepts aim to measure different personal characteristics, they serve different purposes, and can be treated as independent variables with separate classifications. It is possible to use the two variables independently, or together, depending on the purposes of the analysis.

2. This standard variable should be used for all collections which aim to identify the living arrangements of couples. Although there is still a need to maintain 'Registered marital status' as a separate concept, a focus on partnerships better reflects the way people live, thereby providing more relevant information on a wider range of issues. Information on living arrangements, which is needed for deriving 'Social marital status', is also an essential input for family coding. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) therefore recommends that the 'Social marital status' concept be always collected when information on living arrangements is sought, whereas the 'Registered marital status' need only be collected where it is specifically required for the purposes of the collection.

3. Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary section of the 'Overview of family, household and income unit standards'.

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NAME OF THE VARIABLE

4. The name of the variable is 'Social marital status'.

5. The alternative term 'living arrangements' is confusing as it can also be related to wider household relationships (eg. whether the respondent lives alone or with others). Several other alternative terminologies, including: 'marital partnership', 'consensual union', 'consensual marital status', 'cohabitation status', 'partnership status', 'whether partnered', 'whether living with a partner', or 'de facto marital status', are not considered as appropriate as the terminology 'Social marital status' to describe the concept.

DEFINITION OF THE VARIABLE

Nominal definition

6. The variable 'Social marital status' is defined as:

- a person's relationship status in terms of whether she or he forms a couple relationship with another person.

7. A couple relationship is based on a consensual union, and is defined as two people usually residing in the

same household who share a social, economic and emotional bond usually associated with marriage, and who consider their relationship to be a marriage or marriage-like union. This relationship is identified by the presence of a registered marriage or de facto marriage.

8. According to this concept, a marriage exists when two people live together as a couple, regardless of whether the union is formalised through registration. Individuals are therefore regarded as 'married' if they are in a de facto relationship with a partner, or if they are living with their registered marriage partner.

9. 'Social marital status' is an attribute of the counting unit 'person'.

Operational definition

10. Operationally, 'Social marital status' is defined as a person's relationship status in terms of whether she or he forms a couple relationship with another person living in the same usual residence, and the nature of that relationship. It is obtained by derivation from the responses to questions on the 'Relationship in household'.

11. In statistical collections it is not always practical to ask questions which will determine whether bonding usually associated with marriage exists between two people. Accordingly, a Social Marriage is deemed to exist when:

- a registered marriage, de facto marriage or couple relationship (either opposite-sex or same-sex) is reported in response to a question about relationships within the household.

and

- when the two individuals concerned are usually resident in the same household.

12. The definition of 'Social marital status' involves usual residence because operationally it is necessary to consider only relationships between persons who usually reside in the same household. The distinction between visitors and usual residents is used to ensure that partnerships are identified only between persons usually resident in the same household.

Scope of the variable

13. The variable 'Social marital status' applies to all persons aged fifteen years and over.

Supporting variables

14. 'Social marital status' requires the supporting variable 'Relationship in household'.

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STANDARD QUESTION MODULES

27. The methodology for collecting 'Social marital status' varies according to the type of collection and the level of detail required. In household surveys, broad 'Social marital status' is always derived from information collected on the household form. Where more detailed information is required, a computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) module is activated containing an integrated question set which allows further levels of detail to be ascertained and incorporates data on 'Registered marital status' as well. This integrated method is available for use as either an element of the CAI package or in the paper format presented below. In self-completed surveys such as the Census, data is collected at all levels.

Interviewer-based collections

Deriving 'Social marital status' from 'Relationship in household'

28. Broad 'Social marital status' is derived from 'Relationship in household'. Detailed 'Social marital status' requires the collection of broad 'Registered marital status' as well. Further detail on the type of de facto marriage may be obtained by the asking of additional questions. The collection of complete 'Registered marital status' in stages is also described below; derivation of broad 'Social marital status' is always the first stage.

29. The codes and categories of 'Relationship in household' relevant to 'Social marital status' are:

- 1 Husband, wife or partner
 - 11 In a registered marriage
 - 12 In a de facto marriage
 - 15 Opposite-sex couple
 - 16 Same-sex couple
 - 17 Male same-sex couple
 - 18 Female same-sex couple
- 2 Lone parent
- 3 Child under 15
- 4 Dependent student
- 5 Non-dependent child
- 6 Other related individual
- 7 Non-family member
- 9 Visitor

30. The following points concerning application of the variable should be noted:

- The scope of the 'Social marital status' variable does not include persons under the age of 15 years. Therefore, persons classified as a 'Child under 15' are out of scope of the 'Social marital status' classification.
- The operational definition for 'Social marital status' confines marriages within households. Therefore, a marriage is not included if one of the partners is not a usual resident of the household. People who are not usual residents are classified as a 'Visitor' in the 'Relationship in household' classification and are out of scope of the 'Social marital status' classification.
- A criterion for the 'Husband, wife, or partner in a registered marriage' category in the 'Relationship in household' classification is that marriage partners are of opposite sex. Persons in this category are coded to 'Married' in the broad 'Social marital status' classification and 'Married in a registered marriage' in the detailed 'Social marital status' classification.
- Persons classified as 'Husband, wife, or partner in a de facto marriage' are coded to 'Married' in the broad 'Social marital status' classification and are coded to 'Married in a de facto marriage' in the detailed 'Social marital status' classification. Specific categories relating to de facto marriages in the 'Relationship in household' classification (codes 15, 16, 17 and 18) can be used to further disaggregate data according to whether couples in de facto marriages are of the same or of opposite sex (see Table 3).

Derivation at the broad level

31. In household-based collections, 'Social marital status' is derived primarily from 'Relationship in household' information. Information on 'Age' and 'Usual residency' are also required, as parties to 'Social marital status' are both required to be aged 15 years or over, and to both be usual residents of the same dwelling. After age

and usual residency have been established, a 'Social marital status' of 'married' exists when the relationship between two people usually resident in the same household is reported as: husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend (opposite sex couples only). Responses of 'Child under 15' and 'Visitor' indicate persons who are out of scope of this variable; all other responses are coded as 'Not married'.

Deriving 'Social marital status' from 'Relationship in household' and 'Registered marital status': standard integrated question set

32. The standard integrated question set and derivation method provides an integrated approach to collecting both 'Social marital status' and 'Registered marital status' data in interviewer based household surveys. The stages explained below represent a printed version of procedures which in the ABS are usually performed using the CAI instrument; the two methods achieve results which are compatible. Broad 'Relationship in household' data are used to identify usual residents of a household who are aged 15 years or older. In particular, the data are used to identify persons in a couple relationship with another member of the household. A series of marital status questions is then used to distinguish between registered and de facto marriages and to identify the 'Registered marital status' of persons in scope.

33. The integrated question set and derivation method is as follows:

Stage 1 - Deriving broad 'Social marital status'

34. The broad 'Social marital status' of each household member is derived according to the method described above in 'Derivation at the broad level'

Stage 2 - Deriving detailed 'Social marital status'

35. In order to derive detailed 'Social marital status', the collection of part of 'Registered marital status' is also necessary. A 'Social marital status' of 'Married in a registered marriage' exists when the relationship between two persons of opposite sex who usually live in the same household, is reported as: husband, wife, spouse or partner, and the persons' 'Registered marital status' is reported as registered married.

36. A 'Social marital status' of 'Married in a de facto marriage' exists when the relationship between two persons who usually live in the same household is reported as: partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, fiancée, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend (opposite sex couples only), etc.; or when the persons' relationship is reported as husband, wife or spouse and the persons' 'Registered marital status' is reported as a category other than registered married.

37. Responses of 'Child under 15' and 'Visitor' indicate persons who are out of scope of this variable; all other responses are coded as 'Not married'.

38. To ascertain the existence of a registered marriage, Q1 is asked (once per opposite sex couple) to determine if a husband, wife or partner relationship is either a registered marriage or a de facto marriage. Persons in same-sex couples are sequenced to Q2.

Q1. Are and (Partner's name) in a registered

marriage?

Yes ☐ End
No ☐ Go to Q2

39. If the answer is 'yes', the detailed 'Social marital status' of each member of the couple is 'Married in a registered marriage' (see Table 1). If the answer is 'no', the detailed 'Social marital status' is 'Married in a de facto marriage' (also Table 1).

Table 1 Detailed 'Social marital status' decision table

Broad 'Social marital status'	Sexes of couple	Question 1	Detailed 'Social marital status'
Married	Opposite sex	Yes	Married in a registered marriage
Married	Opposite sex	No	Married in a de facto marriage
Married	Same-sex	*	Married in a de facto marriage
Not Married	*	*	Not married
Not applicable	*	*	Not applicable

NOTE: * Data from this question not required for derivation of detailed 'Social marital status'

Derivation at the detailed level, including type of de facto marriage

40. Derivations at this level are identical to the derivations applied at the detailed level, with same-sex couples being further identified by cross-classification of the couples' reported sex.

Stage 3 - Deriving 'Registered marital status'

41. This stage is necessary for the collection of the ABS Standard Variable 'Registered marital status'. Note that from Q1, if the answer is 'yes', then the 'Registered marital status' of each member of the couple is 'Married'. All persons in scope whose detailed 'Social marital status' is not 'Married in a registered marriage' are asked the following question:

Q2. What is's present marital status?

☐ Never married 1 End
☐ Widowed 2 End
☐ Divorced 3 End
☐ Separated but not divorced 4 End
☐ Registered married 5 End
☐

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---|----------|
| | De facto | 6 | Go to Q3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Single | 7 | Go to Q3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Not married | 8 | Go to Q3 |

42. 'Registered marital status' is coded according to the response category chosen (see Table 2). However, some respondents may give answers different from the first five options listed in Q2. The categories 'de facto', 'single' and 'not married' are included on the interview form or the interviewer's computer screen. However, these categories are not included on any prompt card that is shown to the respondent.

43. If the response 'single', 'not married' or 'de facto' is given rather than one of the standard response categories 1-5 above, the following question is asked:

Q3. Has ever been in a registered marriage?

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | Q4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No | End |

44. If the response is 'no', then the person's 'Registered marital status' is 'Never married'. If the response is 'yes', the following question is asked:

Q4. Is widowed, divorced or separated?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|---|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Widowed | 1 | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Divorced | 2 | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Separated | 3 | End |

45. 'Registered marital status' is coded accordingly.

Table 2 'Registered marital status' decision table

Detailed 'Social marital status'	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	'Registered marital status'
Married in a registered marriage	*	*	*	Married
Married in a de facto marriage; or Not married	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	*	*	Coded to Q2 response
Married in a de facto marriage; or Not married	6, 7, 8	Yes	1, 2, 3	Coded to Q4 response
Married in a de facto marriage; or Not married	6, 7, 8	No	*	Never married

Not applicable	*	*	*	Not applicable
----------------	---	---	---	----------------

NOTE: * Data from this question not required for derivation of 'Registered marital status'

Question 2:

- 1 = Never married
- 2 = Widowed
- 3 = Divorced
- 4 = Separated but not divorced
- 5 = Registered married
- 6 = De facto
- 7 = Single
- 8 = Not married

Question 4:

- 1 = Widowed
- 2 = Divorced
- 3 = Separated

Self-completed collections

46. The data used to form the input to the 'Social marital status' classification are derived from those collected for 'Relationship in household'. The questionnaire module is explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard. The methodology is the same as that described above in 'Derivation at the broad level'. The census also asks the following question on 'Registered marital status', responses to which are used to refine 'Social marital status' in the manner described above in 'Stage 2 - Deriving detailed 'Social marital status'.

Q. What is the person's present marital status?

(Married refers to registered marriages)

- ☐ Never married
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated but not divorced
- ☐ Married

STANDARD INPUT CATEGORIES

47. The standard input categories are the same as the categories of the classification and also includes the supplementary category, 'Not stated':

'Social marital status'

Married

Married (not further defined)

Married in a registered marriage

Married in a de facto marriage

Married in a de facto marriage, opposite sex couple

Married in a de facto marriage, same-sex couple

Married in a de facto marriage, male same-sex couple

Married in a de facto marriage, female same-sex couple

Not married

Not married

Not stated

Not stated

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THE CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

15. Three classification criteria are used to form the categories of the classification:

- whether a person is living with a partner in a couple relationship
- whether a person is living with a partner in a registered marriage, and
- whether a person in a couple relationship is living with a person of the same sex.

16. Persons who live in such unions are classified as 'married'.

17. At the more detailed level, those persons who are defined as 'married' are further disaggregated according to whether their relationship to their partner is through a registered marriage or through a de facto marriage.

Application of the criteria

18. These criteria are applied to each person's couple relationship status to produce the major categories of the 'Social marital status' classification as defined below:

Married: a person who is living with another person in a couple relationship. This relationship is either a registered marriage, or a de facto marriage.

Not married: a person who is not living with another person in a couple relationship. This includes persons who live alone, or with other family members, and those in shared accommodation; it also includes persons

who are in a registered marriage or in a de facto marriage, but whose partners are not usually resident in the household.

Married in a registered marriage: a person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and this relationship is a registered marriage.

In practice, a person is classified to this category if his or her relationship to another person (of the opposite sex) usually resident in the same household is husband, wife or spouse, and the 'Registered marital status' of both partners (if also asked in the collection) is married.

Married in a de facto marriage: a person who lives with another person in a couple relationship and this relationship is not a registered marriage.

In practice, a de facto marriage exists between a couple of opposite sex when the two people are usual residents in the same household and their relationship is partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover, boyfriend, girlfriend or when their relationship is husband, wife or spouse and the 'Registered marital status' of one or both partners (if also asked in the collection) is a category other than married.

A de facto marriage exists between a couple of the same sex when the two people are usual residents in the same household and their relationship is husband, wife, spouse, partner, de facto, common law husband/wife/spouse, lover or boyfriend. The term girlfriend should not be used as an indication of a de facto marriage between two females who are usual residents in the same household.

Traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin marriages

19. The ABS recommends that partners in traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander marriages should be coded as Married in a registered marriage even though traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander marriages are not registrable marriages under the Commonwealth Marriage Act 1961. This should not be a significant statistical issue for most collections.

THE STANDARD CLASSIFICATION AND CODE STRUCTURE

20. The 'Social marital status' classification is a four level hierarchical structure. The one digit level is referred to as the broad level. The second level (two digit) is referred to as the detailed level. The subsequent third and fourth levels are referred to as further disaggregations of the detailed level. The classification is as follows:

1 Married

- 10 Married (not further defined)
- 11 Married in a registered marriage
- 12 Married in a de facto marriage
 - 15 Married in a de facto marriage, opposite sex couple
 - 16 Married in a de facto marriage, same-sex couple
 - 17 Married in a de facto marriage, male same-sex couple
 - 18 Married in a de facto marriage, female same-sex couple

2 Not married
21 Not married

21. This classification uses a two-digit code rather than a four-digit code, which would usually be used in a four level hierarchical classification structure. The use of a two digit code reduces storage and processing costs. The code structure also allows consistency in the coding of de facto couples (using the digits 5, 6, 7 and 8) with the 'Relationship in household' classification.

Residual categories and codes

22. Not applicable.

Supplementary codes

23. The following supplementary codes are used to code non-responses:

9 Not stated
98 Not stated

SCOPE OF THE CLASSIFICATION

24. The 'Social marital status' classification applies to all persons aged fifteen years and over.

APPLICATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION TO OTHER VARIABLES

25. The concept of 'Social marital status' is fundamental to the identification of couples and families and is therefore an essential component of the variables 'Relationship in household', 'Family composition', 'Income unit composition' and 'Household composition'.

CODING PROCEDURES

26. The ABS applies the classification criteria listed above to 'Relationship in household' data using either a selection process within a computer assisted coding instrument, or the Census processing system.

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STANDARD OUTPUT CATEGORIES

48. For 'Social marital status' output may be in aggregate form, comprising two categories - 'Married' and 'Not married'; or in an expanded form as follows:

Married

in a registered marriage

in a de facto marriage

Not married

49. Output at a greater level of detail is not generally recommended as the reporting of same-sex couple relationships is likely to be low. The data are thus expected to be statistically insignificant and output in some collections may breach ABS confidentiality provisions.

50. Therefore output for 'married in a de facto marriage' should be accompanied by a footnote stating that the category includes partners in same-sex de facto relationships.

Labels and footnotes

51. In publications and discussions where both the 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status' concepts are addressed, clear labels and footnotes must be used to differentiate 'Registered marital status' categories from 'Social marital status' categories.

52. Footnotes should state that in the 'Social marital status' classification:

- The category 'married' includes de facto marriages and registered marriages.
- The category 'married in a de facto marriage' includes same-sex couples.
- The category 'not married' includes persons who are not currently living with their registered marriage spouse or with a de facto partner.

53. A footnote should state that in the 'Registered marital status' classification:

- The category 'married' excludes de facto marriages.

54. In addition, definitions for the concepts and categories used should be listed in a glossary of terms. These should be consistent with those outlined in the Glossary section of the 'Overview of family, household and income unit standards'. In some instances, there may be a need for explanatory notes to further clarify the concepts.

Not registered married

55. Care should be taken when using the term 'Not married' in relation to 'Registered marital status' to prevent confusion with the 'Social marital status' category. The term 'Not Registered Married' should be used in preference, if there is any possibility of ambiguity. It should be noted that the term 'Not Registered Married' relates to those persons whose 'Registered marital status' is coded as 'Never married', 'Widowed' or 'Divorced'.

56. If the term 'Not married' is used where the data refer to 'Registered marital status', the ABS advises it should be footnoted as follows:

'Refers to persons whose 'Registered marital status' is 'Never married', 'Widowed' or 'Divorced', including those who are living with a de facto partner'.

Ever married

57. The term 'Ever married' can be used to refer to all persons whose 'Registered marital status' is other than 'Never married'.

CROSS CLASSIFIED OUTPUT STRUCTURE

Using both 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status'

58. In many circumstances the most useful application of 'Registered marital status' will be in combined output with 'Social marital status'. Where such output is required, the following output structure is standard:

Registered marriage
married

De facto marriage
 never registered married
 widowed
 divorced
 separated
 registered married (1)

Not married
 never registered married
 widowed
 divorced
 separated
 registered married (2)

(1) This category includes individuals still in a registered marriage who have formed a de facto marriage with another person.

(2) This category includes individuals who report themselves as being in a registered marriage but whose spouse is not a usual resident of the same dwelling.

Cross-classifying 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status'

59. It is not anticipated that many collections will present data cross-tabulated in this way. However, when this is necessary, the following format is recommended for output tables:

Table structure

	'Social marital status'		
	Married		
Registered marital status	Registered	De facto	Not Married
Never married	n/a (1)		
Widowed	n/a (1)		
Divorced	n/a (1)		
Separated	n/a (1)		
Married		(2)	(3)

(1) Not applicable as it is not possible to have data for these categories.

(2) This category includes individuals still in a registered marriage who have formed a de facto marriage with another person.

(3) This category includes individuals who report themselves as being in a registered marriage but whose spouse is not a usual resident of the same dwelling.

MEASUREMENT ISSUES AND RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

MEASUREMENT ISSUES

60. No specific measurement issues apply to the variable 'Social marital status' beyond the normal constraints affecting statistical collections, such as problems with confidentiality and standard errors which may prevent the output of data for some of the categories of the classification.

RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

61. Because of the close connection between 'Registered marital status', 'Social marital status', household relationships, and family, household and income unit compositions, none of these should be changed without first considering any implications of the proposed change for the other related classifications.

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1. The standard variable 'Registered marital status' identifies marriage arrangements in Australia, and foreign marriage arrangements, complying with the Marriage Act 1961 and subsequent amendments where those arrangements have an official record. The related variable 'Social marital status' is used to establish the living arrangements of couples in the Australian population. As the two concepts aim to measure different personal characteristics, they serve different purposes, and can be treated as independent variables with separate classifications. It is possible to use the two variables independently, or to cross-classify them, depending on the purposes of the analysis.

2. This standard variable should be used for all collections which aim to identify marriage arrangements with an official record. However, although there is still a need to maintain 'Registered marital status' as a separate concept, a focus on partnerships better reflects the way people live, thereby providing more relevant information on a wider range of issues. Information on living arrangements, which is needed for deriving 'Social marital status', is also an essential input for family coding. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) therefore recommends that the 'Social marital status' concept always be collected when information on living arrangements is sought, whereas the 'Registered marital status' need only be collected where it is specifically required for the purposes of the collection.

3. Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary section of the 'Overview of family, household and income unit standards'.

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NAME OF THE VARIABLE

4. The name of the variable is 'Registered marital status'.

5. The alternative term 'legal marital status' is not recommended because it could be taken to imply that de facto marriages are not legally recognised. The term 'marital status' is not recommended because it is considered too vague for output. Other alternative terminologies, including 'de jure marital status', are similarly not recommended.

DEFINITION OF THE VARIABLE

Nominal definition

6. The variable 'Registered marital status' is defined as:

- a person's relationship status in terms of whether he or she has, or has had, a registered marriage with another person with whom he or she holds, or held, a valid marriage certificate.

7. By definition, the partners in a registered marriage are of the opposite sex, since same-sex relationships cannot be currently recognised as registered marriages in Australia. The Marriage Act 1961 does not

recognise unions solemnized in foreign countries between persons of the same sex.

8. 'Registered marital status' is an attribute of the counting unit 'person'.

Operational definition

9. Operationally, 'Registered marital status' is obtained by direct question. The operational definition is identical to the nominal definition. In most circumstances the result obtained is dependent on respondent perception of marital status.

10. For example, some respondents in de facto relationships may report their (registered) marital status as 'married'. The standard question modules aim to ensure that the correct responses are obtained.

Scope of the variable

11. The variable 'Registered marital status' applies to all persons aged 15 years and over.

SUPPORTING VARIABLES

12. 'Registered marital status' has no supporting variables.

DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

The need for mutual exclusivity

13. The categories 'registered marriage' and a 'de facto marriage' are not mutually exclusive as the term 'married' could legally be applied to both. This means that the marital status of a person could be reported as both 'de facto' and 'married'.

14. For example, an individual who is currently living in a de facto relationship and is separated from a previous registered marriage could be described as either 'separated' or 'de facto'. The promulgation of two separate classifications, 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status', aims to overcome this anomaly.

15. Using both classifications, 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status', that person may correctly be reported as 'separated' with respect to the 'Registered marital status' classification, and in a 'de facto marriage', with respect to the 'Social marital status' classification.

16. The 'Social marital status' and 'Registered marital status' variables can be cross-classified to provide a measure of an individual's 'Registered marital status' as well as his or her current living arrangements.

Demand for 'Registered marital status' data

17. ABS consultation has revealed a strong demand for 'Registered marital status' data. User feedback has shown a desire to continue collecting 'Registered marital status' information, as various community groups are concerned with differentiating between registered marriages and de facto marriages. In particular, objections

have been raised when the 'Married' category of the 'Social marital status' classification has been used rather than the disaggregated categories 'Registered married' and 'De facto married'.

Traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin marriages

18. The ABS recommends that partners in traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander marriages should be coded as Married in a registered marriage even though traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander marriages are not registrable marriages under the Commonwealth Marriage Act 1961. This should not be a significant statistical issue for most collections.

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THE CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

19. The four criteria used in classifying persons to the classification are:

- whether he or she is now, or has been in a registered marriage
- whether his or her most recent registered marriage partner is still living
- whether she or he remains legally married to her or his most recent registered marriage partner
- his or her living arrangements with his or her most recent registered marriage partner

20. Partners in a registered marriage must be of the opposite-sex as same-sex couples cannot, under Australian law, be registered as married or hold a marriage certificate with each other.

THE STANDARD CLASSIFICATION AND CODE STRUCTURE

21. The standard classification is a single-level classification with the following five categories and code structure:

- 1 Never Married
- 2 Widowed
- 3 Divorced

- 4 Separated
- 5 Married

Residual categories and codes

- 22. Not applicable.

Supplementary codes

- 23. The following supplementary code is used to code non-responses:

- 0 Not stated

SCOPE OF THE CLASSIFICATION

- 24. The 'Registered marital status' classification applies to all persons aged fifteen years and over.

APPLICATION OF THE CLASSIFICATION TO OTHER VARIABLES

- 25. In addition to 'Registered marital status', the classification can be cross classified with 'Social marital status' where both have been collected. Care should be taken to ensure that labels and footnotes clearly differentiate the two categories. Recommendations for the output structure of this cross classification are provided in the Output section of this standard.

CODING PROCEDURES

- 26. 'Registered marital status' is self-coded to the classification.
- 27. In self-coded questions the categories of the classification are presented as 'tick-box' options, and each of the possible responses is assigned a numerical code.

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STANDARD QUESTION MODULES

28. The methodology for collecting 'Registered marital status' varies according to the type of collection and the level of detail required. In household surveys, broad 'Social marital status' is always derived from information collected on the household form. Where 'Registered marital status' is required, a computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) module is activated containing an integrated question set which collects this variable and allows further levels of detail for 'Social marital status' to be ascertained as well. This integrated method is available for use as either an element of the CAI package or in the paper format presented below. In self-completed surveys such as the Census, data is collected at all levels.

29. Information relating to the standard questions for collecting 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status' is presented in the following order:

- collecting 'Registered marital status' in interviewer-based collections
- standard integrated question set and derivation method when collecting both 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status' in interviewer-based collections:

Stage 1 - Deriving broad 'Social marital status'

Stage 2 - Deriving detailed 'Social marital status'

Stage 3 - Deriving detailed 'Registered marital status'

- collecting 'Registered marital status' in self-completed collections

Interviewer-based collections

30. The standard question module for collecting 'Registered marital status' in interviewer-based surveys is:

Q. What is's present marital status?

- ☐ Never married
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated but not divorced
- ☐ Registered married

Integrated question set and derivation method: collecting 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status'

31. The standard integrated question set and derivation method provides an integrated approach to collecting both 'Social marital status' and 'Registered marital status' data in interviewer based household surveys. The stages explained below represent a printed version of procedures which in the ABS are usually performed using the CAI instrument; the two methods achieve results which are compatible. Broad 'Relationship in household' data are used to identify usual residents of a household who are aged 15 years or older. In particular, the data are used to identify persons in a couple relationship with other members of a household. A series of marital status questions is then used to distinguish between registered and de facto marriages and to identify the 'Registered marital status' of persons in scope.

32. The integrated question set and derivation method is as follows:

Stage 1 - Deriving broad 'Social marital status'

33. The broad 'Social marital status' of each household member aged 15 years or more can be derived from broad 'Relationship in household' information. Visitors to the household and children under 15 years of age are out of scope of this variable. All husband, wife or partner relationships are coded as 'Married', regardless of whether the relationships are registered marriages or de facto marriages. Any other responses to 'Relationship in household', that is usual residents of the household who are not in a couple relationship and who are aged 15 years and over, are coded to 'Not married'.

Stage 2 - Deriving detailed 'Social marital status'

34. Q1 is asked (once per opposite sex couple) to determine if a husband, wife or partner relationship is either a registered marriage or a de facto marriage. Persons in same sex couples are sequenced to Q2.

Q1. Are and (Partner's name) in a registered marriage?

Yes ☐ End
 No ☐ Go to Q2

35. If the answer is 'yes', the detailed 'Social marital status' of each member of the couple is 'Married in a registered marriage' (see Table 1). If the answer is 'no', the detailed 'Social marital status' is 'Married in a de facto marriage' (also Table 2).

36. If required, the sex of the partners is used to derive a finer classification: 'opposite sex couple' or 'same-sex couple', for those who are in a de facto relationship.

Table 1 Detailed 'Social marital status' decision table

Broad 'Social marital status'	Sexes of couple	Question 1	Detailed 'Social marital status'
Married	Opposite sex	Yes	Married in a registered marriage
Married	Opposite sex	No	Married in a de facto marriage
Married	Same-sex	*	Married in a de facto marriage
Not Married	*	*	Not married
Not applicable	*	*	Not applicable

NOTE: * Data from this question not required for derivation of detailed 'Social marital status'

Stage 3 - Deriving 'Registered marital status'

37. Note that from Q1, if the answer is 'yes', then 'Registered marital status' of each member of the couple is 'Married'. All persons in scope whose detailed 'Social marital status' is not 'Married in a registered marriage' are asked the following question:

Q2. What is's present marital status?

- | | | |
|---|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never married | 1 | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed | 2 | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced | 3 | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separated but not divorced | 4 | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registered married | 5 | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> De facto | 6 | Go to Q3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single | 7 | Go to Q3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not married | 8 | Go to Q3 |

38. 'Registered marital status' is coded according to the response category chosen (see Table 2). However, some respondents may give answers different from the first five options listed in Q2. The categories 'de facto', 'single' or 'not married' are included on the interview form or the interviewer's computer screen. However, these categories are not included on any prompt card that is shown to the respondent.

39. If the response 'single', 'not married' or 'de facto' is given rather than one of the standard response categories 1-5 above, the following question is asked:

Q3. Has ever been in a registered marriage?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | Q4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | End |

40. If the response is 'no', then the person's 'Registered marital status' is 'Never Married'. If the response is 'yes', the following question is asked:

Q4. Is widowed, divorced or separated?

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed | 1 | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced | 2 | End |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separated | 3 | End |

41. 'Registered marital status' is coded accordingly.

Table 2 'Registered marital status' decision table

Detailed 'Social marital status'	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	'Registered marital status'
Married in a registered marriage	*	*	*	Married
Married in a de facto marriage; or Not married	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	*	*	Coded to Q2 response
Married in a de facto marriage; or Not married	6, 7, 8	Yes	1, 2, 3	Coded to Q4 response
Married in a de facto marriage; or Not married	6, 7, 8	No	*	Never married
Not applicable	*	*	*	Not applicable

NOTE: * Data from this question not required for derivation of 'Registered marital status'

Question 2:

- 1 = Never married
- 2 = Widowed
- 3 = Divorced
- 4 = Separated but not divorced
- 5 = Registered married
- 6 = De facto
- 7 = Single
- 8 = Not married

Question 4:

- 1 = Widowed
- 2 = Divorced
- 3 = Separated

Self-completed collections

42. The following question on 'Registered marital status' is asked in the census. The responses may be used to refine 'Social marital status' in the manner described above in 'Stage 2 - Deriving detailed 'Social marital status''.

Q. What is the person's present marital status?

(Married refers to registered marriages)

- ☐ Never married
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Separated but not divorced
- ☐ Married

43. Although the term 'legal' is not used in the question wording, the ABS assumes that, in self-completion collections such as the Census, the respondent will interpret this question to apply to his/her legal marital status since there is no de facto response option and the question specifically states that 'Married refers to registered marriages', and will thus correctly report his/her legal marital status.

44. In surveys where 'Registered marital status' is of major analytical significance, a more precise measure of this concept may be required. In such cases, an additional question: "When did ... get married?" may be used to screen out the de facto marriages.

STANDARD INPUT CATEGORIES

45. The standard input categories are the same as the categories of the classification and also include the supplementary category, 'Not stated':

Never Married
Widowed
Divorced
Separated
Married
Not stated

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STANDARD OUTPUT CATEGORIES

46. For 'Registered marital status' the standard output categories are the same as the standard classification and may also include the supplementary code 'Not stated' if applicable. This is a non-hierarchical structure comprising the five categories:

Never married

Widowed

Divorced

Separated

Married

Not registered married

47. Care should be taken when using the term 'Not married' in relation to 'Registered marital status' to prevent confusion with the 'Social marital status' category. The term 'Not Registered Married' should be used in preference to 'Not married'. It should be noted that the term 'Not Registered Married' relates to those persons whose 'Registered marital status' is coded as 'Never married', 'Widowed' or 'Divorced'.

48. If the term 'Not married' is used where the data refer to 'Registered marital status', the ABS advises it

should be footnoted as follows:

'Refers to persons whose 'Registered marital status' is 'Never married', 'Widowed' or 'Divorced', including those who are living with a de facto partner'.

Ever married

49. The term 'Ever married' is used to refer to all persons whose 'Registered marital status' is other than 'Never married'.

Labels and footnotes

50. The ABS recommends that, in publications and discussions where both registered and 'Social marital status' concepts are addressed, clear labels and footnotes should be used to differentiate 'Registered marital status' categories from 'Social marital status' categories.

51. Footnotes should state that in the 'Social marital status' classification:

- The category 'married' includes de facto marriages and registered marriages.
- The category 'married in a de facto marriage' includes same-sex couples.
- The category 'not married' includes persons who are not currently living with their registered marriage spouse or with a de facto partner.

52. A footnote should state that in the 'Registered marital status' classification:

- The category 'married' excludes de facto marriages.

53. In addition, definitions for the concepts and categories used should be listed in a glossary of terms. These should be consistent with those outlined in the Glossary section of the 'Overview of family, household and income unit standards'. In some instances, there may be a need for explanatory notes to further clarify the concepts.

CROSS CLASSIFIED OUTPUT STRUCTURE

Using both 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status'

54. In many circumstances the most useful application of 'Registered marital status' will be in combined output with 'Social marital status'. Where such output is required, the following output structure is standard.

Registered marriage
married

De facto marriage
 never registered married
 widowed
 divorced
 separated
 registered married (1)

Not married
 never registered married
 widowed
 divorced
 separated
 registered married (2)

(1) This category includes individuals still in a registered marriage who have formed a de facto marriage with another person.

(2) This category includes individuals who report themselves as being in a registered marriage but whose spouse is not a usual resident of the same dwelling.

Cross-classifying 'Registered marital status' and 'Social marital status'

55. It is not anticipated that many collections will present data cross-tabulated in this way. However, when this is necessary, the following format is recommended for output tables:

Table structure

	'Social marital status'		
	Registered	De facto	Not Married
Registered marital status			
Never married	n/a (1)		
Widowed	n/a (1)		
Divorced	n/a (1)		
Separated	n/a (1)		
Married		(2)	(3)

(1) Not applicable as it is not possible to have data for these categories.

(2) This category includes individuals still in a registered marriage who have formed a de facto marriage with another person.

(3) This category includes individuals who report themselves as being in a registered marriage but whose spouse is not a usual resident of the same dwelling.

MEASUREMENT ISSUES AND RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

MEASUREMENT ISSUES

56. No specific measurement issues apply to the variable 'Registered marital status' beyond the normal constraints affecting statistical collections, such as problems with confidentiality and standard errors which may prevent the output of data for some of the categories of the classification.

RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

57. Because of the close connection between 'Registered marital status', 'Social marital status', household relationships, and family and household compositions, none of these should be changed without first considering any implications of the proposed change for the other related classifications.

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1. The ABS has developed the concept of the 'income unit' as a statistical unit appropriate for certain types of income analysis, especially when considering income support (through social security) and income tax. The standard variable 'Income unit composition' supports the identification of Income units within households.

2. A major determinant of economic wellbeing for most people is the level of income they and other family members in the same household receive. While income is usually received by individuals, it is normally shared between partners in a couple relationship and with dependent children. To a lesser extent, it may be shared with other children, other relatives and possibly other people living in the same household, for example through the provision of accommodation either free or at less than market price. This situation is particularly likely in the case of non-dependent children and other relatives with low levels of income of their own. Even when there is no transfer of income between members of a household, nor provision of free or discounted accommodation, members are still likely to benefit from the economies of scale that arise from sharing a dwelling. Therefore the household is the statistical unit most commonly used for the analysis of the levels and distribution of income.

3. However, for some types of analysis, it is appropriate to utilise a statistical unit in which it can be assumed that a high degree of sharing of income, and other economic resources, takes place. A unit based on the degree of sharing of income that can be assumed to take place between couples and dependent children may be more useful, in such cases, than one based on the income sharing which may take place to a lesser extent with other persons in the household. The income unit serves this purpose.

4. Terminology used in this standard is defined in the Glossary section of the 'Overview of family, household and income unit standards'.

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NAME OF THE VARIABLE

5. The name of the variable is 'Income unit composition'.

6. The primary factor determining 'Income unit composition' is the assumption that particular groups of people within a household will pool their income and share the benefits. Any person not belonging to a multi-person Income unit represents an Income unit in their own right. The basis for identifying the Income unit is 'Relationship in household'. For more information, see the ABS Standard Variable 'Relationship in household'.

DEFINITION OF THE VARIABLE

Nominal definition

7. The concept of 'income unit' is defined as:

- A group of two or more related persons in the same household assumed to pool their income and savings and to share the benefits deriving from them equitably; or
- One person assumed to have sole command over his or her income, consumption and savings.

8. This definition of 'income unit' serves as the basis from which the operational definition of 'Income unit

composition' is derived.

9. The variable 'Income unit composition' is defined as:

- The differentiation of Income units on the basis of the number of people in the income unit and the presence of dependent children.

10. 'Income unit composition' is an attribute of the statistical unit 'income unit'.

Operational definition

11. Operationally, 'income unit' is defined as:

- A group of two or more persons who are usually resident in the same household and are related to each other through a couple relationship and/or parent/dependent child relationship; or
- A person not party to either such relationship.

12. The operationalisation of 'Income unit composition' is:

- The allocation of persons in households to categories of the 'Income unit composition' classification on the basis of their relationship to other members of the household.

Scope of the variable

13. The variable 'Income unit composition' applies to all income units.

SUPPORTING VARIABLES

14. 'Income unit composition' requires the supporting variable 'Relationship in household'.

DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

15. Multi-person income units comprise groups of people within a family each of whom is related to another by either a couple relationship or a parent/dependent child relationship. Any person not party to such a relationship, including non-dependent children, is treated as a separate income unit.

16. It is important to recognise these related points:

- Many Australian dwellings accommodate a single household, comprising a single family, comprising a single income unit.
- While a family must comprise two or more persons, an income unit (or a household) may comprise only one person.
- Certain variables, e.g. 'Tenure type', apply primarily to the counting unit 'income unit'. These can also apply by extension to the 'larger' units, 'family' and 'household'.

17. The concept of the income unit rests on two assumptions:

- There are certain family relationships where all income is pooled and shared between all those so related, who benefit equitably from access to their common financial resources.
- Persons not party to such a relationship have access to their own financial resources over which they exercise exclusive control.

18. An additional assumption underlies the operationalisation of the concept:

- The relations about which the ABS makes those assumptions are those between partners in a couple relationship and between parents and their dependent children. In many cases this operational assumption may not be appropriate. Where for example young adults up to the age of 21 who are not full time students and who are unemployed are present, and who are unlikely to have significant financial resources of their own, it may be more appropriate to use the household as the unit of analysis.

19. In ABS statistics, a dependent child is classified as either a child under 15 or a dependent student (i.e. a full-time student aged 15-24 living with his or her parents and with no child(ren) or partner of his or her own) irrespective of his or her financial dependency.

20. An operational constraint of household surveys is that the income unit, like the family, must comprise usual residents of the same household. There are, however, a number of circumstances that may result in parents and their financially dependent children living apart. Specifically, this occurs where:

- Full-time students live away from home, and
- Non-custodial parents provide for dependent children living in another household.

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THE CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA

21. Income units are classified according to the following criteria:

- whether they comprise one person or more than one person;
- among those comprising more than one person, whether a couple relationship exists between two of them; and
- among those where a couple relationship exists, whether there are any dependent children present.

22. Note that one-parent income units always include dependent children. In a one parent family with non-dependent children only, each individual comprises a separate one-person income unit.

THE STANDARD CLASSIFICATION AND CODE STRUCTURE

23. The standard classification of 'Income unit composition' is:

- 1 Couple only
- 2 Couple with dependent children
- 3 One parent
- 4 One person

Residual categories and codes

24. All income units are codable to one of the substantive categories of the classification from 'Relationship in household' data so there is no requirement for residual categories and codes.

Supplementary codes

25. A supplementary code of '0 Inadequately described' is provided for those cases where 'Relationship in household' data are insufficient to identify and classify the component Income units.

Definitions of the categories

26. The categories of the classification are defined as follows:

Couple only income unit: an income unit comprising two partners in a couple relationship.

Couple with dependent children income unit: an income unit comprising two partners in a couple relationship and all of their dependent children.

One parent income unit: an income unit comprising a lone parent and all of his or her dependent children.

One person income unit: an income unit comprising a person who is not party to either a couple or parent/dependent child relationship. Specifically this includes all persons identified by the 'Relationship in household' variable as non-dependent child, other related individual or non-family member.

SCOPE OF THE CLASSIFICATION

27. The classification applies to all income units.

CODING PROCEDURES

28. 'Income unit composition' is coded from data obtained from 'Relationship in household'. The procedures for allocation of individuals to income units follow the same rules and procedures as the rules for identifying families explained in detail in the ABS Standard Variable 'Family composition', with the exception that persons not in couple income units or one parent income units are not allocated to any form of 'Other family' income unit. Such persons form one person income units. The procedures are as follows:

29. Where a couple relationship is identified, the couple will form the nucleus of an Income unit. If 'Relationship in household' data reveal the presence of one or more natural, adopted, step, or foster dependent children of that couple, the couple and the dependent children will be coded as a Couple with dependent children income unit. A couple without dependent children will be coded as a Couple only income unit.

30. Once any couple relationships have been identified in the household, if there is a lone parent with one or more natural, adopted, step, or foster dependent children, that parent and the children will be coded as a One parent income unit.

31. Any person in a household aged 15 or over who is not allocated to an income unit using these procedures will be coded as a One person income unit. Specifically, Non-dependent children of any age, Lone parents without dependent children, Other related individuals and Non-family persons in Family households; and all persons in Group households and Lone person households comprise One-person Income units.

32. Any Child under 15, who is not the natural, adopted, step or foster child of anyone in the household, is allocated to an income unit as a 'nominal child'. The ABS uses the concepts of the 'nominal child' and 'nominal parent' where to all intents and purposes a 'parent-child' relationship exists, to facilitate a more accurate and analytically useful picture of the arrangements that may exist in the household. Children under 15 who are not the natural, adopted, step or foster child of anyone in the household are allocated to an income unit in the same way as a 'nominal child' is allocated to a 'nominal parent' in family coding. See the ABS Standard Variable 'Family composition' for more detail. The rules for allocating a nominal child are applied in the following order:

- Sibling aged 25 or more. The nominal child's eldest sibling who is over the age of 25 is assigned as the nominal parent.
- Closest other relative. The nominal child's closest non-sibling relative aged 25 or more is assigned as the nominal parent. If necessary relationships by lineage (vertical) take precedence over other types of relationships. For example, grandmother over aunt, or aunt over cousin.
- Couple relationship. Persons in a couple relationship are assigned as the nominal parents of the nominal child.
- Child to female parent. The nominal child is assigned a female nominal parent in preference to a male nominal parent. For example, aunt over uncle.
- Eldest person rule. The nominal child is assigned the eldest person usually resident in the dwelling as their nominal parent.

33. Where an unattached Child under 15 is allocated to an income unit in accordance with the procedures detailed above, the child is treated in the same way as a natural, adopted, step or foster child. The income unit composition of the nominal parent's income unit is then established in accordance with the procedures set out above. This may result in a Couple only income unit becoming a Couple with dependent children income unit or a One person income unit becoming a One parent income unit.

34. In summary:

- Couple relationships are identified first. Each identified couple, along with their own dependent children, comprises a separate Couple only or Couple with dependent children income unit.
- Any lone parents and their own dependent children form separate One parent income units.
- Any other person aged 15 or over forms a separate One person income unit.
- Children under 15 who are not the children of any couple or lone parent in the household are attached to an income unit as prescribed above.

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STANDARD QUESTION MODULE

35. Income unit composition is coded from 'Relationship in household' information and the recommended methodology and questionnaire modules are explained in the 'Relationship in household' standard. It may be necessary to identify an income unit reference person, deploying the same criteria used to identify Family and Household reference persons (see 'Relationship in household', Appendix A - Identifying household and family reference persons).

STANDARD INPUT CATEGORIES

36. The standard input categories are:

Couple only

Couple with dependent children

One parent

One person

Inadequately described

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STANDARD OUTPUT CATEGORIES

37. The standard output categories are the same as the input categories.

- Couple only
- Couple with dependent children
- One parent
- One person
- Inadequately described

38. As Income unit composition is a flat classification, the categories may be grouped and subtotalled to suit different analytical purposes. For example:

- Couple
 - Couple only
 - Couple with dependent children
- One parent
- One person

or

- Income units with dependent children
 - Couple with dependent children
 - One parent

Couple only
One person

Mandatory output information

39. Although all output stated above is standard, there must be glossary definitions for every standard output label used.

MEASUREMENT ISSUES AND RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

RELATED CLASSIFICATIONS

40. The 'Income unit composition' classification is related to the following classifications:

- 'Relationship in household'
- 'Household composition'
- 'Family composition'
- 'Social marital status'

41. Changes to any of these classifications cannot be considered in isolation and all possible ramifications concerning the other classifications must be investigated before any changes are adopted.

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